

RUSSIA'S BROKEN WAR MACHINE—ANATOL LIEVEN

DECEMBER 22, 1997 • \$3.50

THE NEW REPUBLIC

South Korea's Swoon • Mass Marriage • John Ashcroft's Run

The Amistad Legacy



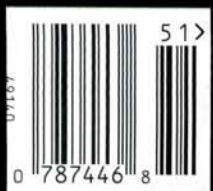
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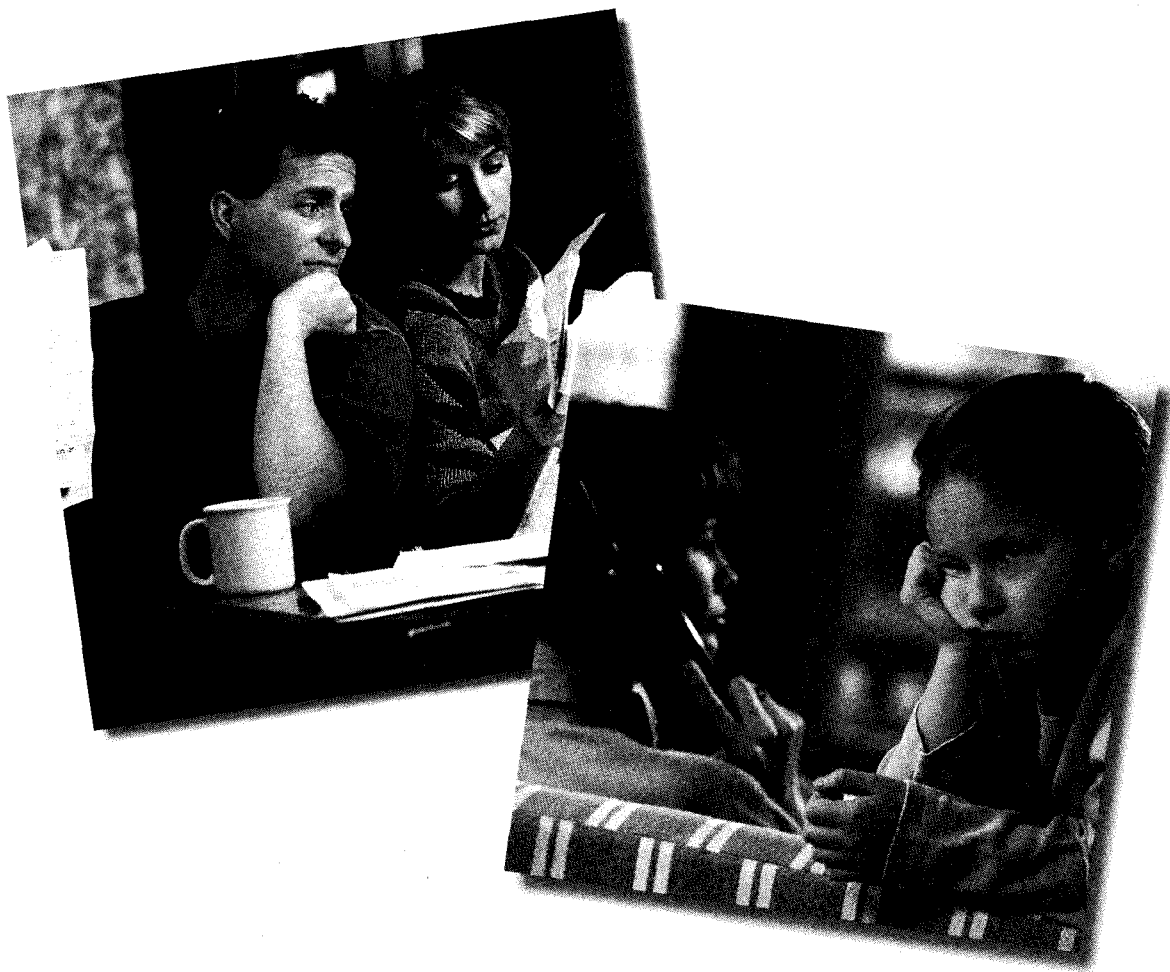
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RON K UNZ
555 BRYANT ST #371 VB
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Sean Wilentz: John Quincy Adams and Joseph Cinqué
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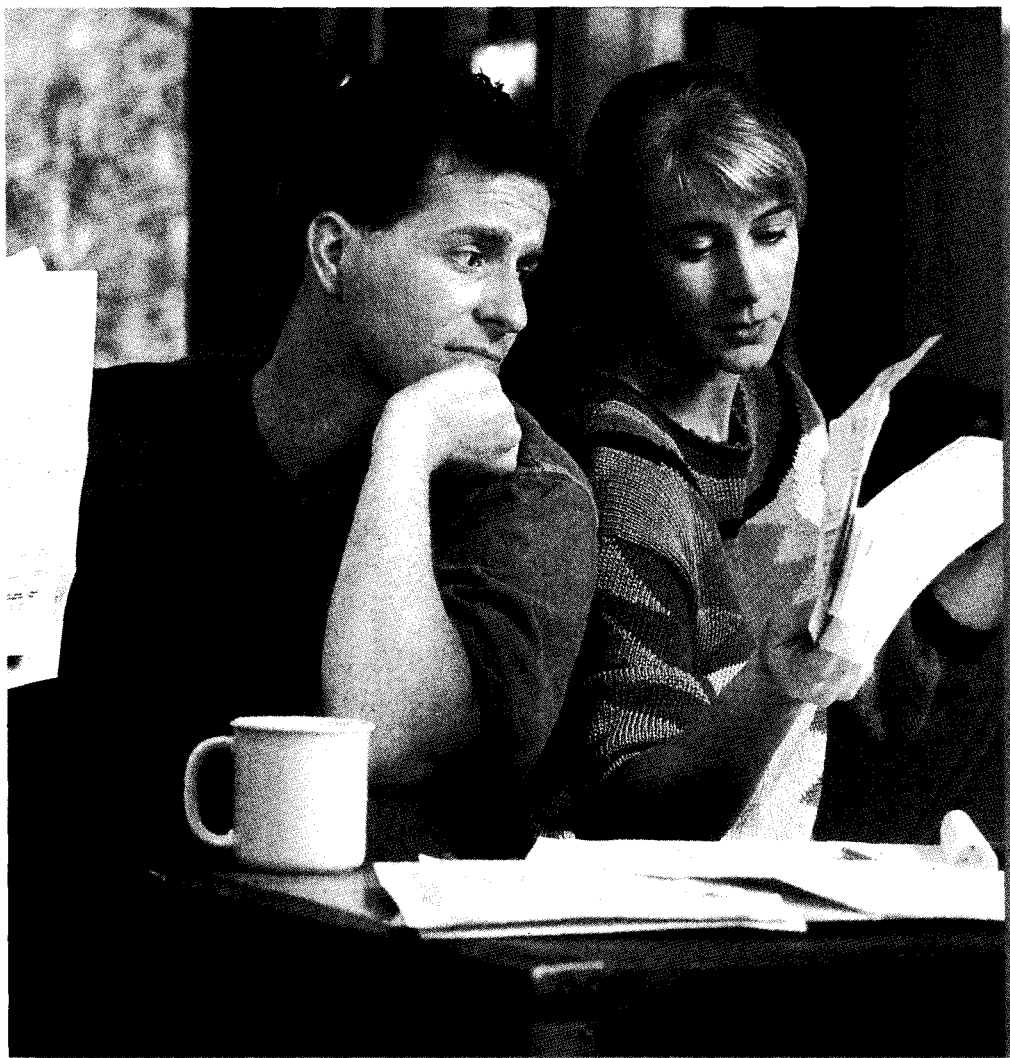


**WE THOUGHT A SKY-HIGH
SWITCHING FEE WAS THE WORST
THING BELL MONOPOLIES COULD
DO TO FAMILIES.**



(Wrong)

**After leaving the Bell monopoly,
the Bittermans started seeing double
when their phone bill came.**



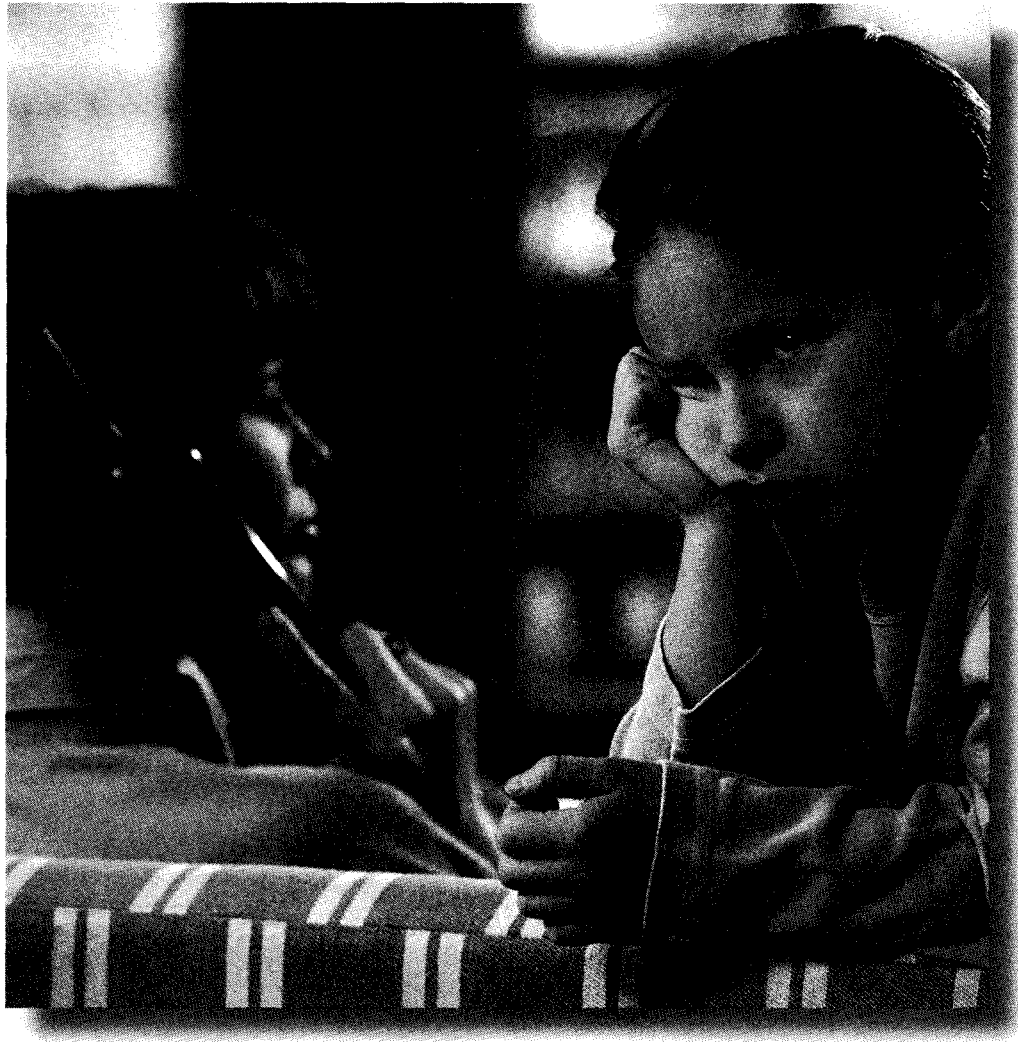
Imagine for a moment what it would be like to have a giant monopoly demanding money for a service they didn't provide. For many American families, this isn't hard to imagine.

Many of the Bell monopolies keep billing people after they've switched to another local phone company. This double billing causes all sorts of needless tension and anxiety for people who only wanted to exercise their right to choose.

MCI is working with federal and state regulators to offer people real, unfettered choice. We need to make the Bell monopolies pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test and obey the law. Until we do, nothing will change.

The Bell monopolies are creating new barriers to competition every day. But we won't stop until consumers get relief. MCI will work with federal and state regulators, and other new entrants, to open local markets to offer people a real choice. Together, we will make the regional Bells obey the spirit of the law, pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test, and stop abusing consumers.

**The Bell monopoly gave the Moffets
the new local phone company they requested.
(Minus a dial tone.)**



It's an all too common story. After weeks of stalling, complaining and just plain playing dumb, the Bell monopoly finally gets around to honoring a request to switch to another local phone company. Then the dial tone vanishes.

How exactly are people supposed to enjoy their constitutional right to try a different local phone company without a dial tone? They're not. And, if things don't change, they never will.

We can't sit by idly while American families are mistreated. MCI will continue to work with federal and state regulators to make the Bell monopolies obey the law, pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test, and stop coercing people into giving up their right to choose.

The Bell monopolies are creating new barriers to competition every day. But we won't stop until consumers get relief. MCI will work with federal and state regulators, and other new entrants, to open local markets to offer people a real choice. Together, we will make the regional Bells obey the spirit of the law, pass the Telecommunication Act's Fair Play Test, and stop abusing consumers.



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CORRESPONDENCE

Fraud squad

To the editors:

In his article "Anatomy of a Policy Fraud" (November 17), Stephen Glass omitted a slew of facts. He attacks the assault weapons ban as "negligible." This charge ignores the record. The number of assault weapons traced to crimes fell 20 percent in the first year after the ban was enacted. The number of cops killed by assault weapons fell from ten to just one in one year. Policymakers are concerned about copycats that evade the law, but why attack the administration for passing the best bill it could, over NRA opposition?

Furthermore, Glass argues that "cities can't afford" the 100,000 police funded by the president's crime bill. Again, the record shows otherwise. More than 10,000 jurisdictions applied for and received grants by submitting applications that required them to plan in advance for the day that their grant runs out.

Without citing any research, Glass claims that smaller towns "don't really need" more officers. But the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports show that rural crime isn't falling as fast as the national average, and in some areas is not falling at all.

Glass claims that the Justice Department was "afraid" to publish a "devastating report on the crime law's impact." That's just wrong. And while one section of the report criticizes the financial impact of some of the broadest state "three strikes and you're out" laws, it doesn't propose repealing the narrower federal one; it merely says it should not be expanded.

Glass also claims, without a scintilla of proof, that the report was buried. This is ludicrous. Under normal National Institute of Justice standards, the request would never have been published. But NIJ took several unusual steps to publicize it. It's been on the World Wide Web almost six months, where more than 1,800 people have downloaded it. Summaries of it were sent to more than 60,000 academics and practitioners. And while I'm sorry that Glass couldn't find the right person to send him one, NIJ has been selling copies of the report since May.

BERT BRANDENBURG
U.S. Justice Department
Washington, D.C.

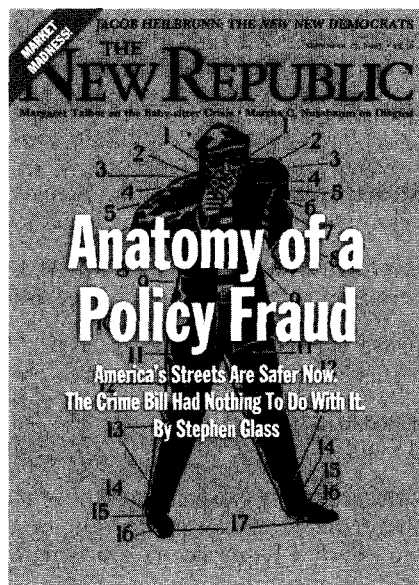
Stephen Glass replies:

First, it's misleading to say crimes linked to assault weapons have fallen. The study Brandenburg cites only looked at crimes one year after the ban began, when legal

copycats were not as widely available. The most recent independent study conducted this summer—almost three years after the ban began—indicates the number of assault weapons traced to crimes is statistically identical to the period before the ban went into effect.

Second, as I reported, fewer than 20 percent of communities nationwide have detailed plans to pay for their officers when the federal grant runs out. Many said it will be hard for them to come up with the money. That's why Senator Carol Mosley-Braun is proposing a bill to make the federal money permanent.

Finally, my story reported that the Justice Department posted the reports on the World Wide Web and printed summaries in the NIJ journal. What it criticized the Department for was not "publishing" it. Claiming the Department cir-



culated the report blurs what, in academia, is a bright line between substantive publication, which carries professional authority, and essentially leafletting.

Tree huggers unite

To the editors:

Many of my colleagues and I support policies that benefit people, communities, and the environment. President Clinton and Vice President Gore, on the other hand, support policies that are harmful to both people and the environment by locking up our public forests and favoring wildfires instead of sound forest management.

Jonathan Chait, in his article, "Stump Speech" (November 17), would have readers believe that the good, reasonable, scientifically based legislation this Congress is considering is nothing but a joke. Specifically, he attacks legislation I drafted titled the Community Protection

and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Act. Chait says it's a farce designed to cut more trees, but I'd like to see him persuade the 25,000 Californians who were driven from their homes by wildfires during the catastrophic 1993 fire season.

Despite the rhetoric put out by the polarized extremes, a scientific, balanced perspective is finally being heard. It is unfortunate that Chait's article fails to recognize these possibilities.

It is also unfortunate that Chait failed to get the facts correct. Wood and wood products are environmentally friendly ways of providing the building materials and products we need without relying on products that require such intensive consumption of fossil fuels. By relying on wood, we can reduce our dependency on steel, concrete, aluminum, and brick, all of which release much more carbon dioxide to the atmosphere in the production process.

Furthermore, Chait departed from good science and common sense in stating that "the problem with cutting down old trees that have absorbed their fill of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is that most of it gets released back into the atmosphere during the felling." The idea that cutting a tree turns it into a gaseous form, emitting carbon into the atmosphere, is about as far-fetched as believing in the Easter Bunny.

As Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health, I am looking for win-win solutions. Chait would do well to reread the global carbon dioxide hearing documents and the Forest Health Report to get the science correct. When he understands it and reports it accurately, he can help defuse a needlessly polarized issue.

HELEN CHENOWETH
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Crimes and misdemeanors

To the editors:

Robyn Gearey's article, "College Cop-Out" (November 10) is long on rhetoric but short on the facts. The University of Pennsylvania believes the Federal Crime Awareness and Security Act is an important statute, and we take our responsibilities under it very seriously.

KENNETH J. WILDES JR.
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

To the editors:

Robyn Gearey's story about campus crime cites the U.S. Department of Education's admonishment of Virginia Tech in June of last year regarding an alleged rape in September 1994.

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Where We Stand

A commentary on public education and other critical issues

A School is Reborn

By **SANDRA FELDMAN**, President
American Federation of Teachers

A critical question in American education is how to provide poor children in failing and mostly urban schools with a good education. Voucher advocates have given up and argue that we should just rescue a few children by subsidizing their tuition at private schools. But how can we have a *public* policy of saving a few kids and ignoring the rest? If a school is that bad, no one should be stuck there.

Instead, we must—and can—educate all the children by turning around schools that are disorderly and unsafe and where kids are not learning. Close them if necessary; rethink everything about them—and do it fast.

This is not just talk. It's what Chancellor Rudy Crew, with the support and collaboration of the United Federation of Teachers, is doing in New York City. Schools that were performing so poorly the state threatened to take them over are being redesigned. Most are starting to improve, and some have made remarkable progress.

I recently visited PS 154 in central Harlem, where scores in a state-wide reading exam have risen 19.5 percent since the redesigned school opened in September 1996. (This figure is solidly documented, unlike the claims made for some private school voucher programs.)

PS 154 looks the way a good school should. The hallways are bright and clean and filled with the terrific work of children. There are no graffiti, no torn-up bulletin boards. Classroom doors stand open, and you can hear the sounds of children and teachers working together. They look busy and intent on what they're doing.

Most of the students are poor. They come from a public housing project across the street, and nearly 95 percent are eligible for Title I funds. Some have very serious problems, but the majority are average, normal-to-bright, big-city kids—and they are thriving.

A Dirty, Disorderly Place

Two years ago, the children in PS 154 were among the lowest-achieving students in the city. The school they attended, this same school, was dirty and disorderly. It was always short on books and supplies, and the adults—teachers and administrators—were often at odds with one another. There was no vision of what the school should be—or any hope of making it different and better.

How did all this change? First, PS 154, which had been neglected and starved for support and resources by its local sub-district, was taken over by the chancellor. The chan-



Two years ago, children in PS 154 were among the lowest-achieving students in the city.

cellor's office, together with the United Federation of Teachers, assisted PS 154's administrators, parents, teachers, and other staff in redesigning the school. The idea was to draw up a plan whose every part would help improve student learning. PS 154 ultimately chose as a centerpiece, "Success for All," a reading program that has proven very effective in inner-city schools, and they organized the rest of the education plan around that program.

Teachers who wanted to be part of the new PS 154 were invited to apply; others transferred to schools elsewhere in the district. In all, 50 percent of the teachers stayed on. The rest were mostly new, young teachers who were eager to work in the redesigned school. All of the teachers—both new and experienced—got extra training to prepare them for putting the education plan into action.

Working Together

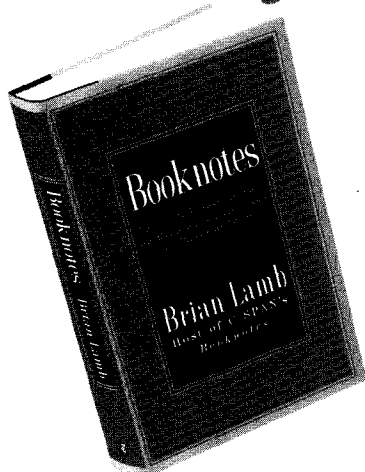
As for the leadership, the final and all-important piece, the school got an excellent new principal. She and the school's talented union building rep were able to work together and help teachers and parents follow through on every detail of the redesign.

This is a story about one school—and it's only the first chapter. But there are many stories like it, and more to come. In fact, as I was writing this column, the state education department and the chancellor announced that PS 154, along with 14 other schools, was being removed from the state's list of low-performing schools—a major accomplishment in such a short period of time.

But there's another angle—an important one: Vouchers divide a community; they pit the few families who "win" the voucher lottery against the many who do not. They encourage people to give up on neighborhood schools and take scarce resources out of these schools. In contrast, the rebuilding of PS 154 demonstrates something very different. Many groups made a commitment to fix this school so all the kids in the neighborhood could get a good education. Together, they achieved what none of them could have done alone. And in helping a community get back its neighborhood school, they made the community stronger. ■

Where We Stand is published once every month in *The New Republic*. To comment, write to Sandra Feldman, AFT, 555 New Jersey Ave. N.W., Washington, DC 20001. © Sandra Feldman 1997. Visit our web site (<http://www.aft.org>).

A Gift of Note for the Holidays



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Which author was interviewed
for a presidential staff position
in the White House barber shop?
See page 240

Which acclaimed historian
frequently writes in the nude?
See page 11

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T I M E S B O O K S

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FROM WASHINGTON

Numbers racket

I can recall in detail the first discussion I ever had about affirmative action during my four years at the University of Michigan. It lasted about 20 seconds. When I broached the topic with a fellow freshman, he informed me that the admissions department did not give minorities preferential treatment. After I expressed surprise, he assured me it was a fact. He had learned this in class.

His belief did not represent the willful ignorance of a radical fringe, but the official position of the university. And so the entire public discussion of affirmative action at Ann Arbor mirrored my abbreviated bull session. Whenever the occasional right-wing malcontent complained about minority admissions preferences, the administration would politely and patiently explain that the university did no such thing.

This was an extremely effective debating tactic. But now the jig is up. This summer, Carl Cohen, a philosophy professor and campus anti-P.C. gadfly, deployed the Freedom of Information Act to force the university to release its admissions data. They proved the critics' direst complaints: Michigan is running a racially bifurcated admissions system, with radically lower standards for blacks than for whites. The admissions chart, which indicates whether to accept or reject candidates with a given grade-point average and standardized test score, actually has separate lines for "underrepresented minorities." According to the chart, a white or Asian applicant with a GPA between 3.2 and 3.3 and an SAT score between 1090 and 1190 would be automatically deferred, while an underrepresented minority with the same credentials would be automatically accepted.

Two white students who were denied admission despite strong credentials—one had a 3.9 GPA—promptly sued the university for racial discrimination. Michigan will probably lose and become

the next major university to repeal its affirmative action.

But the administration is still in denial. "We do not have a separate review of files, nor do we have a different standard for minority applicants," maintained Dennis Shields, dean of admissions at Michigan's law school. You can see how this line worked in the past, when the university's practices remained secret. But now it just seems self-defeating. Instead of waging a philosophical defense of racial preferences, or coming clean, or at least thinking up a *different* lie, Michigan's administration is simply wrapping its old lie in a bizarre point of semantics. Perhaps its policies do not constitute "a different standard." But, as administration spokesman Walt Harrison put it: "We can and do use race as a factor in our admissions process. It's not the determining factor."

Michigan's very policies reveal the absurdity of this distinction. Suppose that the university considered race "as one factor" by adding a full point to the GPA of all minority applicants.

This would have the same effect as creating a separate minimum entrance requirement for minority applicants equal to one GPA point below the standard for white applicants.

The tragic thing about Michigan's prevarication is that it stunted the development of a reasonable alternative to affirmative action. Michigan, as a public institution, could not keep its admissions policies hidden forever. Denying the existence of racial preferences implicitly concedes their immorality. This guaranteed that, when the truth inevitably came to light, the disclosure would delegitimize not only Michigan's racial preferences, but any racial preference.

The problem with the university's admissions policy, at least from a practical standpoint, is not that it took account of race, but that it went too far. Even affirmative-action opponents agree that Michigan's academic standards are strict enough that the university rejects a certain number of candidates who could do well. And even the staunchest advocates of racial preferences would concede that you could theoretically set the admissions bar for minorities too low. Virtually nobody would claim that a high-school student with a 2.0 GPA and an 800 SAT score would more easily thrive at Harvard than at a less competitive school.

So, at some point on the spectrum, a racial preference helps its intended beneficiaries. And at some point on the other end of the spectrum, it hurts its intended beneficiaries. The tough part, for honest defenders of racial prefer-

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DECEMBER 22, 1997

THE REAL LINKAGE

Maybe the world's luck will hold, and it will not soon see a war fought with chemicals and bacteria. But, if such a war breaks out, we will know in advance whose canisters on whose missiles from whose launchers will be responsible for it. Saddam Hussein has already unleashed at least one of these agents of agonizing death on some of Iraq's own population; and, while claiming to be in compliance with the United Nations Security Council's resolutions forbidding him to make various disease-bearing carriers and nuclear armaments, he has let it be known that he has plenty of them in his arsenal. In any case, the U.N. inspection teams have a pretty good idea of what he does have, and of how much. They need to know not what, but where. The important point is that the consideration of these weapons of mass destruction is not a matter of deterrence theory. In this case, deterrence has *already* broken down.

Of course, it is ridiculous that a state so ignominiously defeated as was Iraq in Operation Desert Storm should have been able so quickly to flout the minimal rules set by the victors. For this result, blame George Bush, James Baker, and Colin Powell. In the final hours of the 100-hour Gulf war, they were seized by the thought that the territorial integrity of the geographical artifact called Iraq had to be maintained, even at the cost of allowing the very man whose crimes started the war to remain in power. Yes, the United States finally established safe havens in the country's north and south, ostensibly to protect the Kurds and Shiites from Baghdad's vengeance. But these safe havens can now be seen as precedents for similarly contrived venues in Bosnia.

Bill Clinton began his first term with a hint that the U.S. could do business again with a penitent Saddam, as if the dictator's character were in flux. From the beginning, in fact, Clinton's vagaries on foreign policy did not recommend him as a steward of America's position in the Gulf. The coalition cobbled together after the invasion of Kuwait began to dissolve, its members going their naturally separate ways. (What was at stake in 1991 was "land and honor," the latter meaning that Saddam's men were raping Kuwait's women. Apparently, though, that horror exhausted our reluctant Arab allies' imagi-

nations of evil.) And Saddam was always testing his will against the Americans. We were, he found out, perfectly willing to exercise hegemony, but on the cheap.

Thus, the crisis that began on October 29, when Saddam commanded the American members of the U.N. inspection team to go, actually has its origins in the events of August 1996. It was then that Saddam's forces drove into Iraqi Kurdistan—where they were expressly forbidden—and liquidated many members of Iraq's small democratic opposition and also many Kurdish activists. These were people who had staked their lives on American power, some of them as agents of the American government working from what was a de facto U.S. base in northern Iraq.

In this episode, Saddam had quickly gotten the measure of the present White House incumbent he was facing down. Moreover, the erstwhile Gulf war allies had already deserted. They would not permit the U.S. to respond militarily from their turf; they would not help and they would not provide cover. This was a sign of ill winds to come, especially from the Arab states who were most in peril from Iraq. Still, the U.S. did have ships in the Gulf, and it could fly B-52s in from Guam. And so, to sonorous trumpets, these assets were assembled to punish Iraq once again. Only this time, we aimed but two inconsequential volleys of missiles at pinprick targets.

Emboldened by last year's limp U.S. response, Saddam has now struck again, and by striking as he did, he won three to four crucial weeks to sequester, unseen and uninterrupted, the anthrax, botulin, and other toxins which one day may bring a fearsome dying to his enemies. Even now, after our Russian "ally" (whose economic troubles we may soon salve to the tune of \$5 billion) has enchanted us into a vague agreement which on inspection, it turns out, is no agreement at all, Saddam is still forbidding the U.N. inspectors to conduct an uninhibited search of potential weapons sites. The Russian view of American interests has always been well represented in Clinton circles by Strobe Talbott. But his new boss, Madeleine Albright, wore no such blinders,



or so we thought. We were, then, more than a little stunned when she hurriedly packed her bags in India to make a late-night meeting with Saddam's old comrade Yevgeny Primakov in Geneva before his plane was scheduled to leave for Brazil.

Hence the current anxiety of U.S. allies in Iraq's neighborhood. The most important of these is Turkey. All through the cold war, Turkey braved its Soviet neighbor's pressures as a loyal member of the NATO alliance. In Desert Storm, it allowed our fighters to take off from Turkish territory and to fly over Turkish airspace. Even more critically, during those six long months between the invasion of Kuwait and the start of bombings by the U.S. and Great Britain, Turkey closed its oil and gas pipelines with Iraq, at a cost of many billions to itself and, as was intended, to the coffers of Saddam.

Turkey has been a very trusting ally. So, now that it wants nothing to do with our anti-Saddam maneuvers, we should ask ourselves why. The Turks had seen that we had just about stopped tangible support for the Iraqi democrats' multiethnic, multiconfessional resistance movement from which a coup against the tyrant, we were told at its birth, might eventually come. In fact, the Turks saw that the CIA had simply abandoned the cadres that it had itself helped to create. The U.S. even closed down the radio station which was to give these cadres a clandestine voice.

Furthermore, Turkey shares a border with Iraq, and irredentist Kurds straddle this frontier. Among them is a large and popular terrorist network styling itself the PKK, or the Kurdish Workers' Party, which is financed and manipulated by Syria. Despite this patronage from Hafez Assad, a long-time enemy of Saddam, Saddam has his own uses for Kurdish terror. He routinely threatened to incite the PKK against Ankara, and had often actually done so with devastating effects on Turkish civil life. It was his way of exporting the Kurdish secession from Iraq to Turkey, a continuous warning to the Turks who had lost an empire but would not—could not—countenance further dismemberment of their remnant country.

This is one reason that the Turks had specifically, for their own protection, counted on the highly touted dual-containment policy to keep both Iraq and Iran at bay. Another reason, it turns out, is that the Iraqis had linked up not only with the PKK, but also with the Barzani faction of the Kurdish movement in the U.S.-protected enclave. And the Iranians are ensconced with the Talabani faction in the same zone. So, both Iraq and Iran have succeeded in what Washington had aimed to prevent. This is, then, an American failure all around, a big American failure.

If the U.S. would not, or could not, decisively control Saddam, the Turks resolved that they would make a deal with him themselves. And they have. Not content to rely on the unreliable U.S. to keep Iraq in check, Turkey has opted for its own arrangements. And Iraq is not at all deterred from reciprocation, even though Turkey's most significant security ties, aside from those it has with the U.S. and Western Europe, are with Israel.

Faithful though it has been to U.S. aims in the

region, Turkey seems always to be at the receiving end of American reproaches. Now we are issuing *démarches* to the government against banning the Islamist party which has shown that it wants to wreak havoc with the secular character of the state, the cardinal principle of the Kemalist revolution. In doing this, the State Department purports to speak on behalf of the ideal of civil society. Increasingly, however, and especially in places like Turkey and Algeria, the phrase means the ascendancy of the ultras, the religious zealots. Certainly no such U.S. interdict was applied to Israel when its parliament banned Meir Kahane's Kach party.

And none is delivered to Egypt when, frightened by the very real threat of Islamist terror, its government brutally, and seemingly at random, silences or kills anyone it decides is a dangerous religious enemy of the Egyptian state. But, then, no country has been more coddled by the United States, or has benefited more from Pax Americana, than Egypt. Egypt takes our money and then rides with our enemies. Recently, it has sided with Libya in its dispute with the U.S. over terrorism. Now, it is taking up the cudgels for Iraq. According to both CNN and the Arabic newspaper *Al Hayat*, President Hosni Mubarak has issued this cool verdict: "Iraq is no longer a danger to the region."

Yet the Clinton administration has not penalized Egypt in any way for this, or for its continuous undermining of the peace with Israel. Mubarak was again indulged when he simply refused to come to the October 1996 summit in Washington to which Benjamin Netanyahu, Yasir Arafat, and King Hussein were summoned to move the peace talks off dead center. Only last month Cairo skipped the economic conference in Doha, Qatar, also convened by the United States. Egypt should not be able to have it both ways.

As for Saudi Arabia, it fears Iraq with Saddam in power; and it fears Iraq without Saddam. Such an Iraq, the Saudis think, would not hold. And Iraq's Shiite majority would then carve out their own state, one uncomfortably close to the Shiite areas of the Kingdom itself—which are also mostly the oil areas. Still, the royals must tremble at the thought of the Iraqis' new war toys.

But the Saudis, and the other Arabs of the Gulf, dread the arrival of American emissaries. We come, they know, to advise and defend them—but for a price. It is a cost too high. So Saudi Arabia is once again, as before the invasion of Kuwait, building bonds to Saddam, and, like Egypt, claiming that this is actually a consequence of the deal we could not pull off between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Of course, in 1991, when the Saudis did side with the United States against Iraq, Netanyahu was not prime minister. Israel was governed by Yitzhak Shamir, and he wanted no deal whatsoever. When Saddam invaded there was little talk in official Riyadh or Cairo—or, for that matter, Damascus—about the Gulf alliance being premised on Israeli concessions to the Palestinians.

In a historical sense, then, the concept of "linkage"

between the Arab-Israeli conflict and the conflict in the Gulf is a phony one. But in another, ironic, sense linkage is real. The fact is that all of the leaders of the Arab countries which Saddam's missiles may reach are asking themselves: What confidence can we have that Bill Clinton would stay the course against Iraq? How far out on a limb should we go with him, and how deeply exposed can we afford to be? And they are drawing their nervous conclusions from the U.S. administration's treatment of Israel.

In their eyes, this is the most pro-Israel administration in history, with deeper affinities to Jerusalem than even Harry Truman's. And yet, at the first sign of trouble, and unwilling to take responsibility for consequential decisions that the U.S. both did and did not take vis-à-vis Saddam, President Clinton, Secretary Albright, and National Security Adviser Sandy Berger have each latched on to the transparent but convenient alibi that Netanyahu's foot-dragging on the peace process is to blame for the failure of the old coalition to coalesce once again. After all, it's no secret to the Arabs that, in a hard calculus of fulfilled and unfulfilled obligations of the Oslo accords, Yasir Arafat's debits are far, far greater than Netanyahu's. An administration which pretends otherwise and puts one of its closest friends in the dock is not to be relied upon, the shrewder Arabs understand, and perhaps the shrewder Israelis as well. •

THE HARD QUESTIONS

AUTHORITY FIGURES

By Jean Bethke Elshtain

Alexis de Tocqueville is, once again, the most famous Frenchman in America. C-SPAN has dispatched a bus to retrace Tocqueville's famous tour of America, with stops at each site Tocqueville visited in 1831. There's a Tocqueville Web site, Tocqueville T-shirts and mugs, Tocqueville videos. Both President Clinton and Newt Gingrich list Tocqueville's classic, *Democracy in America*, as indispensable reading. Why all the fuss? Perhaps because Tocqueville provides at least some grist for everyone's ideology. His emphasis on responsibility and decent, ordered liberty appeals to conservatives; his frequently elegiac musings on equality have a similar effect on liberals.

But something is absent in this something-for-everyone image of Tocqueville—namely, his profound reflections on the question of authority. This is unfortunate, since what Tocqueville has to say on this particular subject is arguably his most relevant contribution today.

The most common understanding of authority and

its role in democratic society comes primarily from a strain of thought that traces back to John Stuart Mill, a contemporary correspondent with Tocqueville and author of his own classic, *On Liberty*. Mill believed that authority and liberty were at odds—that the former, unchecked, inevitably destroyed the latter. This fear was one the United States's founders shared: lest self-government by the people become a tyranny in practice, they instituted a constitutional form of government, with all the attendant checks and balances.

But liberty and authority also go together, as Tocqueville argued. Tocqueville was no defender of authoritarianism, but he still understood the need for authority in social and intellectual life. He realized that the resort to tyranny is an indication that legitimate authority has broken down and given way to brute force. The crucial distinction here is between authoritarianism, on the one hand, and authoritative rule or governance, on the other. The former erupts when the latter breaks down. The term despot describes one whose rule has become authoritarian, hence illegitimate. This is a far cry from those authoritative civic, religious, and social institutions, without which a democratic society cannot survive. For example, Tocqueville argued that religious belief was, in the words of political theorist George Kelly, "inseparable from free government and free public life because it was the channel of a self-imposed moral restraint that shaped, and in so doing, liberated the individual for participation in the republic." This means that the churches and other institutions of moral and social life must be sturdy—they must, in other words, have authority to set common rules and create common understanding among members of a community.

In the United States today, alas, such institutions are getting weaker. The end result is that citizens have become more fearful and mistrustful. Unable to take anything on trust, they grow disdainful of all institutional forms and rules. As a result, citizens wind up trusting neither government nor one another. When polls show that only 25 percent of Americans believe their government can be trusted and that political figures are considered no more trustworthy than used-car salesmen, it is nearly impossible to build workable, pluralistic political coalitions. We will do politics only with those who look or think exactly as we do, and even then we are suspicious. For the collapse of trust in institutions feeds a growth of mistrust between persons more generally. When asked whether most people can be trusted, only 35 percent of Americans say yes. If, to this, one adds the triumph of subjectivism—the view that an idea's validity is a function of the identity of the person who holds it—you wind up with our sterile cultural incantation: "You have your opinion and I have mine." And we walk away.

And what happens then, once everything is up for grabs and persons place no confidence in authoritative norms and claims? We know Tocqueville's response: at that juncture we're on a fast track toward democratic

despotism, a world in which we have a hard time accepting that anyone—or any authority—has a legitimate claim to constrain another's actions or, indeed, to call us to action. Behind attempts at persuasion, or appeals to a common good, we see only naked force. If everything is power and violence, then all simply grab as much as they can for themselves. Hannah Arendt argued precisely along these lines in her masterwork, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, when she claimed: "The ideal subject of totalitarian rule is not the convinced Nazi or the convinced Communist, but people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the reality of experience) and the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exists."

Tocqueville would heartily concur. Authority and liberty are not opposites: they are twins. If we kill one, we lose the other. For legitimate authority is about standards, distinctions, plural institutions, norms, claims, and counterclaims—all of which are under attack today. If Tocqueville is right, the end result will not be greater freedom, but a free-for-all that ushers in despotism. •

Korea's collapse, made in Japan.

PAPER TIGER

By Sebastian Mallaby

One of life's great pleasures is a meeting with Eisuke Sakakibara, Japan's most outspoken financial diplomat. When I lived in Tokyo between 1992 and 1995, I used to savor my visits to him at the Finance Ministry. He would appear in a green suit rather than the standard gray or blue one; he could be blisteringly rude, a refreshing change from the emollient of his fellow bureaucrats. And, despite the economic slump that gripped Japan all through my time there, Sakakibara exuded a combative optimism. Japan's state-directed economic model was far better than Anglo-American *laissez-faire*, he lectured me. The proof, he would say, lay not just in Japan's post-war miracle, but in the fact that the Asian "tigers" had copied the Japan model—and boomed.

Sakakibara's boosterism has been duly rewarded with his promotion to the top international job in Japan's Finance Ministry. But the ideas that he promoted have not fared so well. Southeast Asia has had its well-publicized implosion; and in November, Japan itself suffered the worst spate of bankruptcies in its history, losing two big brokerages and a bank. But the really sharp humiliation for the Sakakibara thesis lies elsewhere. When the International Monetary Fund led a

posse of foreign donors to South Korea's rescue, Sakakibara's engaging resistance to the hegemony of Anglo-American economics was buried for good. Of all the Asian tigers, none had copied the Japanese model more faithfully than South Korea.

During the late 1980s the model's partisans had declared flatly that Japan's economy would overtake America's: that the two countries would soon be "Trading Places," in the phrase chosen for the title of one popular Japan-boosting book. Then, between 1990 and 1992, Japan's stock market lost half its value; its land lost three-quarters of its value; and the idea that Japan was poised to overtake America lost all value. So Japan boosters came up with a new argument. For a developed economy, Anglo-American deregulation might be necessary, they conceded: Japan had slipped up by retaining government controls long after their usefulness had expired. But for developing economies, state-directed industrialization was perfect. Hence Japan's leap to riches from the rubble of 1945.

On first inspection, this thesis seemed quite persuasive. After all, the Anglo-Americans themselves bent their liberal principles during their own industrializations: the British empire was mercantilist, while late nineteenth-century America built up its industrial muscle behind protective tariff walls. In the early stages of a country's development, private firms are weak, markets are rudimentary, and a disproportionate share of human skills tends to be concentrated in the government. For these reasons, according to the Sakakibara thesis, state planners should coordinate the use of a poor country's limited resources. Then, when skills and capital have grown more plentiful, and when private corporations have acquired their own sophisticated strategists, state planners should retreat.

There was always one flaw in this prescription. In Japan's case, when the moment to retreat arrived sometime around 1980, the bureaucrats were having so much fun controlling everyone that they simply declined to stop. But this objection was never quite conclusive. Might not bureaucrats in other countries prove better at retreating? Surely the economic woes of Japan in the '90s, the product of a bizarre financial screwup, were too anomalous to form part of a general refutation of Sakakibara's claims.

This is where South Korea enters the argument. Now Japan is no longer the only country where powerful bureaucrats spent a decade or so failing to retreat from their hegemonic role in the economy, and where the result was financial catastrophe: forced to turn to foreigners for a \$55 billion bailout, South Korea now fits this pattern, too. Moreover, the years leading up to South Korea's current prostration contain a telling lesson. From around 1980 on, many of Korea's top technocrats sincerely wanted to liberalize the economy, but the heavy intervention of the 1970s made this extremely difficult. Once a government gets involved in directing industrialization, it takes on responsibilities that are very difficult to shed.

South Korea is the perfect test of Sakakibara's thesis,

because no other economy is modeled so closely on Japan. Between 1910 and 1945, Korea was run by a Japanese colonial government that pursued an industrialization policy based closely on the one that had worked so well at home. After 1945, South Korea continued to look to Japan for guidance. Park Chung Hee, the military strongman who commanded South Korea from 1961 to 1979, was educated in Japanese military academies, and was said to be more comfortable speaking Japanese than Korean. He created an economy that, like Japan's, was hostile to inward foreign investment and imported consumer goods, and ruthlessly focused on exports. Like Japan, it combined world-class manufacturing with much less developed agricultural and service sectors. And, even more than Japan's rulers, Park's government played a vigorous role in directing industry. It told banks whom to give credit and factories what to build.

The results, as believers in the Japan model never tired of saying, were miraculous. When Park took power, the average South Korean earned about \$100 a year, less than the average Indian or Ghanaian. In 1980, the year after he was assassinated, Gross Domestic Product per head stood at \$1700. Time and again, Park brazenly ignored the advice of orthodox Western economists. During the late 1960s, Western donors refused to back Park's plan to build a steel mill in South Korea, arguing that a peasant economy could not support a successful steel industry. But Park Tae Joon, the man in charge of launching the steel plan, had been educated at Waseda, one of Japan's top universities. He crossed the Sea of Japan to secure promises of investment and technical advice from his old friends. Posco, the steel company thus born, is now the world's second-biggest. With similar chutzpah, and similar success, Korea launched itself into shipbuilding and electronics.

The trouble, as believers in the Japan model seldom admit, is that Park's habit of commanding industry distorted the economy in ways that outlived him. In the last few years of his rule, from 1973 to 1979, Park led a charge into the metals, machinery, and chemicals industries. Firms investing in these areas were showered with cheap loans and other subsidies. The experience of one firm, Daewoo, illustrates this process nicely. On Park's instructions, Daewoo diversified out of the business that it knew, which happened to be textiles, and charged into machine tools, ships, and cars. In the process it consumed discounted loans on an astonishing scale; by the end of the 1970s, its debt-equity ratio had reached 900 percent. (The average for American manufacturers is under 200 percent.) Other *chaebol*, as Korea's big conglomerates are known, grew and borrowed similarly.

This had several nasty consequences. For one thing, it caused the economy to fall under the sway of a few big firms, since the select few that enjoyed ties to the president hogged all the discounted capital. For another, it weakened Korea's main banks: from 1973 to 1979, three-fifths of their loans were made on government orders and at discount rates, which undermined both their

capacity for judgment and their profits. But the biggest cost of Park's industrialization drive became apparent with the second oil shock. The *chaebol*'s revenues dropped, so that they could no longer service their huge debts. Having goaded them to expand, the government felt obliged to bail them out—especially since they had grown so large that the bankruptcy of any one of them would have been disastrous for the whole economy.

From the moment Park died in 1979, Korea's technocrats knew that they had to correct his legacy by reducing government direction of the economy. But whenever they tried to retreat, the distortions wrought by Park blocked them. The *chaebol* constantly threatened to stifle competition from small firms, leaving Korea's government no choice but to adopt an active anti-monopoly policy. The banks constantly threatened to go bust, so Korea's government had no choice but to oversee them closely.

Worst of all, industrialists had grown addicted to government guidance. Under Park's leadership, the normal checks on private investment plans had been destroyed: capital had been rendered artificially cheap for favored firms; the risk of failure had been dulled by the implicit promise of government rescue; the only restraint on the *chaebol*'s expansion had been a system of official permits. And so, whenever the government began to relax the permit system and let firms invest as they chose, the *chaebol* unleashed an investment boom that threatened to blow up the economy. This left the technocrats no choice but to seize the economic controls back from them.

That, in essence, is what has happened recently. During the mid-1990s, the *chaebol* responded to tentative liberalization by investing at a crazy pace. The second biggest, Samsung, promised to quadruple sales over six years; by 2001, it hoped to produce \$200 billion worth of goods, more than the entire output of Sweden. Now that the economy has hit a bump, Samsung has been, not surprisingly, the first to announce cuts in investment and management pay. Across the economy, thousands have lost their jobs. The unemployment rate, which stood at 2.2 percent last year, is expected to double soon. And, if the parallels with Japan hold, Korea could be in for a half decade of hard times.

In 1995, South Korea became the first former basket case to graduate from the ranks of the World Bank's borrowers and turn into a lender; in his speech to mark the occasion, Russ Cheetham, the World Bank's vice president for East Asia and the Pacific, talked enthusiastically about the "Korean model." Now that the Bank is participating in a huge bailout of its model pupil, the significance of that model may be understood in a new and more balanced way. State-guided economies have indeed notched up some eye-popping years of growth. But guidance has its costs, which can come back to haunt an economy years after the guides have recognized their obsolescence.

SEBASTIAN MALLABY is *The Economist*'s Washington bureau chief and author of its "Lexington" column.

WASHINGTON SCENE

MARRIED IN A MOB

By Margaret Talbot

I met Yumiko outside the ladies' room, where she was standing patiently with maybe forty other brides—brides to the left of her, brides to the right of her, like an assembly line at a cake decoration factory. She wore a filmy veil, a white lace dress, and white lace gloves, and when I asked her about her husband, she giggled like a girl anticipating her honeymoon. But for Yumiko and her new husband, Demian Dunkley—as for the 2,500 other couples married by the Reverend Sun Myung Moon in a mass wedding and “marriage rededication” ceremony at RFK Stadium in Washington, D.C., last Saturday—there would be no honeymoon. For that matter, there would be no living together, at least for the foreseeable future. “She’ll be in San Diego doing what she needs to be doing for the church,” said Demian of his bride, who came to the U.S. from Japan three years ago under the auspices of Moon’s Unification Church and who now works in a church-run restaurant. “And I’ll be in Wisconsin doing what I need to be doing”—raising money to send his uncle, “the Messiah of Malta,” to Malta, which doesn’t yet know it has a Messiah. “Someday,” said Demian, who is 24 years old and speaks in a dreamy sort of cadence, “she and I will figure out how to do what she and I need to do together.”

As for getting to know one another, as for the joys and trials of daily life in a shared household, all that will have to wait, too, perhaps indefinitely. Yumiko speaks only a few words of English so conversation is kind of a bust. Besides, Demian and Yumiko were first introduced only three days before the ceremony. Theirs is a church-arranged marriage—the Unification movement’s most blessed sacrament, made all the more so when it is, like this one, interracial and cross-cultural. (Though Moon has long fostered such marriages, he is, it seems, increasingly and specifically pushing matches that pair Asian women with white men, in the tradition of so many mail-order brides. “In the Last Days,” Moon has said, “it is natural that Western women will long for Oriental men and Western men will long for Oriental women,” whose purity will save America from Satanism.) Yumiko is shy but very pretty, and both bride and groom seem as trusting as children or dogs, sure that their church leaders know far better than they who they should be paired with for the rest of their lives.

While a friend snaps pictures of the newlyweds, Demian tells me a story about his parents—that is, his

biological parents, not the “True Parents,” as Moon and his wife are known. When he was a baby, his mother joined the Unification Church, and because his father did not, they divorced. “My mother wanted to give herself fully to the True Parents, so when I was a year old, she gave me to the only person who would take care of me, my father.” Demian’s father raised him in England and Italy, but eventually Demian returned to the states and joined the Unification Church. “For my father, the divorce was very painful,” he says. “For me, well, I spent my whole life away from my mother.”

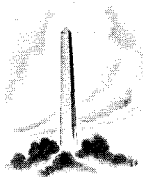
His mother is here at the stadium today, and Demian is hoping to see her, though he knows she is busy with far more pressing church duties and though it surely won’t be easy to find her in a crowd of 40,000. His is a story about the church breaking up a family, but Demian doesn’t seem to see it that way. Demian seems happy. He has heard the Reverend Moon speak, albeit in Korean; he has had “holy water”—the contents of a plastic bottle of Evian—sprinkled on him; he feels he has been waiting all his life for this moment.

Maybe the late ’90s will be remembered as another era of the regimented crowd, of conformity justified by a sense of emergency. Maybe it will be remembered as an era in which it seemed right and good to make the most intimate pledges amid a cast of thousands, to renounce and repent en masse, on cue. In the last two years alone,

we’ve had the Million Man and the Million Woman marches and Promise Keepers rallies in stadiums across the country. Of course, Moon was presiding over orderly crowds and behemoth weddings long before any of those pack renunciations. Weddings are at the center of Unification ritual because marriages—between partners matched by Moon or his proxies in the church—are at the center of Unification theology. Moon-blessed marriages are supposed to renew the opportunity to create perfect, sinless families—the same opportunity that God first extended to Adam and Eve (who flubbed it by giving in to carnal temptation) and then to Jesus (who flubbed it by dying) and now to Moon himself, whose own family is supposed to be a model of sinlessness and connection to God.

Still, this particular mass wedding was explicitly promoted in the now-familiar language of social conservatives bemoaning the decline of marriage in the United States. The couples may have been sent their separate ways for the greater glory of Reverend Moon—where, exactly, are the family values in that?—but the glossy brochures for “Blessing ’97” all cited the importance of encouraging fidelity and “true families” and of defeating the scourge of divorce. When Louis Farrakhan, a social conservative of sorts, made his appearance at the rally, he told the wildly cheering crowd that “America is suffering. Over fifty percent of all marriages end in divorce. America can never retrieve her glory . . . unless America comes back to God and puts God at the center of marriage.”

The honing of Moon’s new heal-the-family rhetoric is surely no coincidence, for Moon is in particular need of some positive attention at the moment. Although the



worldwide business empire he presides over—which embraces everything from media outlets like the Nostalgia Network or *The Washington Times* to companies that manufacture religious icons or sell seafood—is apparently as lucrative as ever, his religious discipleship, especially in the U.S., has been dwindling. Moreover, an ugly little scandal in the true family may have disillusioned at least some church members. Moon's oldest son, Hyo Jin Moon, and his daughter-in-law, whom Moon himself matched, began divorce proceedings in the summer of 1996. The daughter-in-law, Nansook Hong Moon, charged that her husband had a cocaine habit, that he physically abused her, and that she and her five children had finally fled the luxurious family compound in terror.

So are the mass weddings good p.r.? Well, up till now, not exactly. They look weird to most Americans—"the loss of scale and intimacy, the way love and sex are multiplied out, the numbers and shaped crowd"—as Don DeLillo described the phenomenon in *Mao II*. But these days, everybody is for marriage, right? Even Whitney Houston, late of *The Preacher's Wife*, was scheduled to sing at "Blessing '97," and only backed out at the last minute. In the era of the regimented crowd, maybe even a Moon wedding isn't quite as strange as it once was. I guess ideas have consequences. •

TIJUANA POSTCARD

FRONTIER MEDICINE

By Dana Calvo

My drug broker in Tijuana wore smears of black eyeliner, a fleshy smile, and a white lab coat. Her name was Carmen, and I found her perched behind the counter at Vida Farmacia, a medium-sized pharmacy in the downtown tourist district. I sidled up to the counter and self-consciously whispered my request: I was in search of the Food and Drug Administration's latest contraband, the diet drug fen-phen. U.S. officials had pulled fen-phen from the shelves in September, after experts linked it to potentially fatal heart valve deformities, but I had heard it was readily available here. Sure enough, with nary a moment's pause, the pharmacist walked out from behind the counter and sweetly patted my waist. "Okay," she said, while other customers perused the mirrored walls. "Take this card to Dr. José Santiago Hernandez Glez. It's \$20 for each month's supply."

I wasn't the only American in the pharmacy that day. Indeed, transactions like mine are increasingly common today in border towns like Tijuana, where prescription



medicines are available for as little as half of the U.S. price, and where even highly regulated substances can be purchased without so much as a raised eyebrow. When the American press and government talk about cross-border drug traffic, they usually have cocaine and marijuana in mind. But there is evidence that the semi-licit trade in ostensibly less dangerous substances is, if anything, just as big. A 1996 study estimated that one out of every four people entering the U.S. from Mexico brings back pharmaceutical drugs purchased across the border. "If you spend an afternoon in the bordertown of Nuevo Laredo you see thousands—thousands—of Americans in the pharmacies," says Marv Shepherd, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin and author of the study. While U.S. pharmacies near the border complain about the bargain-basement competition, Mexican officials estimate pharmaceutical sales bring in millions of dollars each year.

Until recently, the typical U.S. consumer of Mexican pharmaceuticals was a senior citizen marooned by a fixed income and a dependency on large quantities of expensive medication. Today, however, the average customer is a 33-year-old American male in search of mood-altering pills or anabolic steroids. Valium is the most popular drug; Rohypnol, the "date rape drug" that renders an individual unconscious for hours at a time, was running a close second until U.S. officials outlawed its import last year. There's no telling what sort of cross-border rage the U.S. banning of fen-phen will create.

Of course, importing fen-phen is illegal. But neither U.S. nor Mexican laws seem to have much impact on the pharmaceutical trade. For example, Mexican law prohibits the dispensing of medication without a prescription. But that's not much of a barrier: prescriptions are easy to come by in Tijuana, as I quickly learned. On the back of the card that Carmen gave me, she wrote her name and in block letters, "FENTERMINA." Leading me by the hand, we walked out of the store and to the sidewalk's edge. She pointed across the crowded street to Dr. Hernandez's shingle. "He's just past the money exchange booth. You can't miss it. Go up the stairs. Turn left." I walked across the street and down about 50 feet. Sure enough, just beyond a booth where a state police officer was talking to the money changer about the latest baseball scores, a set of stairs led up to a dark floor. There were at least four medical offices, with doctors' names painted on windowed walls.

Dr. Hernandez's business card described him as a general practitioner who treats venereal diseases, anemia, bronchitis, hemorrhoids, ulcers, varicose veins, and "weight loss." I found a seat in one of the four chairs in his waiting room—a small closet-like room, with a bathroom off to the side that everyone on the hall apparently shared—and then a young man approached. I showed him the card, and said I wanted six months' worth, at \$20 a month. He nodded and walked into the next office. I heard a deep-voiced man speaking; moments later, the young man was back with a small white bag and my medicine. I asked him if I

needed to see the doctor, but he shook his head. "How many do I take?" I asked. "One a day," he said with phenomenal authority.

I have no idea what qualifications or training that young man possessed, but then that's the way business seems to be done here. The doctors frequently dispense medication without ever personally seeing patients, let alone examining them. The pharmacists, like Carmen, are trained as apprentices—there is no licensing process or official registry. The drugs themselves are suspect, too: there's no tracking mechanism in case a medication needs to be recalled. The Food and Drug Administration claims that the ingredient levels in Mexican-produced drugs vary beyond acceptable U.S. standards.

If U.S. consumers worry about anything, though, it's the possibility that Mexican officials will decide to make examples out of them—the way they did with David Busch, a 45-year-old insurance consultant from Wisconsin. In March, Busch drove down from San Diego to purchase 13 medications, including Valium and fen-phen, for his wife and niece. "Ninety-nine-point-nine percent of the time," Busch explained to me, "you can walk in there with nothing and drive across the border with a bag of medicine shoved in your pants." This time, however, Mexican officers arrested him outside the pharmacy and accused him of obtaining medication without a proper prescription. Under Mexico's Napoleonic code, Busch had to prove he was innocent or face up to 40 years in jail. He and his wife spent their \$65,000 savings on prison living expenses, phone calls home, and legal costs. Finally, in September, the charges were dropped, and Busch came home.

While Busch says the officers were trying to shake down the pharmacist, Mexican officials maintain that they were merely enforcing the laws as they always do. In fact, after the Busch episode they vowed to make their laws clearer—and to make them more readily available to unwitting lawbreakers in pharmacies. But it's hard to take those promises seriously, given the ease with which the pharmaceutical trade continues. Mexican officials have little interest in clamping down on what has become a major industry, and U.S. customs officials—well, they have bigger things to worry about.

Or at least that's what I concluded as I watched a 24-year-old office manager from Los Angeles whom I met at my Tijuana pharmacy breeze back into the U.S. She was carrying a ten-month supply of furosemede, the diuretic known as Lasix, which both controls blood pressure and masks the appearance of other substances in drug tests. She had no prescription and had no idea she was in violation of the law. Dressed in denim overalls and carrying nothing more than a checkered handbag and a plastic bag filled with the medicine, she stopped in front of an agent near the turnstile. She showed her driver's license, stated her citizenship, and reentered the country. I'm sure she'll be back again soon.

DANA CALVO is a writer who lives in Southern California.

A personal *Amistad* voyage.

MAKING A NAME

By Cinqué Henderson

Cinqué (Senghe Pieh) was from Sierra Leone. That much is certain. He was a Mende and, according to some, a "big man" in his village—a prince, or possibly the son of a prince. The rest must be pieced together from forgotten records a century old. When Cinqué failed to pay some debts, he was sold by Africans to the Portuguese. Loaded aboard a trans-Atlantic slaver with five hundred other men and women, he was forced to endure the nightmare of the middle passage from Africa to Cuba.

This wholesale impressment was mostly routine: although by 1839 Britain, Spain, and the U.S. had banned the slave trade, the traffic in human beings went on as before. In Cuba, Cinqué and 50 others were bought by two plantation owners, and packed into the hull of a ship called *La Amistad*, bound for the eastern tip of the island. But there was a storm, and Cinqué was waiting. He found a nail and used it to unlock his chains; then, huddled in the dark, he unlocked the chains of the other captives. They decided then and there to be free or to die trying. Some did die, but not before killing most of the crew. Cinqué spared the lives of the Spanish sailors and attempted to sail the ship, following the moon east back to Africa.

Fooled by the Spanish sailors, the Africans were steered instead to America, captured by the United States Navy, and brought ashore, where they landed in the middle of the American struggle over slavery. Abolitionists took up their cause against President Martin Van Buren, who wanted them returned to Spain to face certain death. They fought the case all the way to the Supreme Court, where former president John Quincy Adams finally secured the Africans their freedom. They sailed home to Sierra Leone.

I've known this story my entire life, told it over and over again, even studied it as the subject of my senior honors thesis in college. Now the whole world is about to learn Cinqué's story, thanks to *Amistad*, the new film by Steven Spielberg, and I find myself feeling strangely ambivalent. It's not that I'm complaining. In fact, Spielberg and his producer, Debbie Allen, hired me to work on the film, as their "creative executive," which is just a fancy Hollywood word for a factotum. I was responsible for a little bit of everything: research and rehearsals, casting and publicity. The filmmakers even gave me a bit part (in a scene that wound up on the cutting-room floor).

But before *Amistad*, Cinqué's story was mine in a way it

was no one else's. I'd perfected a certain weariness when it came to explaining where my name came from, telling the story to people I liked, withholding it from those I didn't. Now my uniquely proprietary position is about to vanish. The once intensely private is about to go public, in the biggest possible way. We take this confusion for granted now, between the public and the private, but it's not so easy to handle when you're the one confused.

I wish I could say I learned the story of my namesake at my father's knee, handed down to him by his father. But what I learned about Cinqué, I learned from a comic book: *Golden Legacy*. There was an entire series of them, dedicated to the lives of unsung black heroes, replete with color pictures, cliff-hanger endings, and little bubble captions that floated above the heads of the characters and told you what they were thinking. It was history in bite-size pieces, history on a stick, stuck in between Spider-Man and Archie.

My full legal name is William Cinqué Henderson Jr. My family has always called me Cinqué, but at the age of seven I started asking others to call me William. "Cinqué" had caused enough stress—it was too strange and unpronounceable to make my life in South Carolina an easy one. My family and the people who knew me well would, of course, keep Cinqué alive, but that was private life. In public I could be someone else.

Actually, it was not the first time I'd tried to change who I was—or, rather, who I appeared to be to the outside world. I had been Gary for a while (after the actor Gary Coleman who seemed so at ease around the white people who'd adopted him on TV), then Paul (after the apostle who had once been Saul but was changed by God into someone else entirely). But I knew William could stick since it was my father's name too.

But I wasn't a "Jr.," even though I signed my name that way. My father was really William Clark, named for William Holden and Clark Gable, his mother's favorite movie stars. He changed it to William Cinqué Henderson during the height of black power, when the story of Cinqué first reappeared. No one told me this outright. I just figured it out because by the age of six or so, I had already become fascinated with the mail. Letters are the most tangible proof a suffocating child has that the outside world is real and that a connection to it is possible. Among the stacks of bills and correspondence, a letter would occasionally arrive addressed to William Clark. I wondered who this man was, and why my father was opening his mail. My mother told me that my father had changed his name, but the rest of the world hadn't caught up. It was the first inkling I had that a person could turn into anyone he wanted to be.

In fifth grade, I almost became Cinqué again. One day at show-and-tell, I introduced myself as Cinqué and told the class that it—not William—was my real name. Then I pulled two giant, rusted swords from under my desk and proceeded to tell them the story my father had told me. He'd gotten the swords in Africa. Traveling in the land of our ancestors with my mother, he happened across a tiny village where he was suddenly challenged to a duel by a

fierce African warrior. After long hours of struggle, not knowing whether he would live or die, my father won out over his opponent and banished him from the village. Overcome with joy, the elders offered to make my father chief. He refused, choosing instead to return to his family and the struggle for equality in America. He turned down the gold and diamonds they offered, and took the swords instead.

The class was riveted, slightly in awe of me, this child of an African chief. I asked my father for more. Could he change his mind and go back? Why didn't he take some of the gold? Could we still get some of it? Could they send it to us in the mail? He was embarrassed by my credulity and by his tiny deception, and told me that he had really bought the swords at an open-air market on the South Side of Chicago. With that, I changed my name one more time, and this one would stick until my senior year in high school: Cinqué was out but now even William was poison. Call me Will, I said from then on.

One of the Africans in the movie has the same last name as the historical Cinqué. He was from Sierra Leone, too, and he put us in touch with everyone there we needed. He claimed to be a direct descendant of Cinqué, and most everyone thrilled to the notion. I knew it wasn't true, even though he still believes it, and still avows it. His most compelling "proof" was his surname, but African ancestry doesn't work like that. I was annoyed by the irony of this black man's arguing for African authenticity through the use of European naming conventions.

I didn't want to steal his thunder, but I quietly shared my skepticism. I'd rather him happy just to be himself, and even if he wasn't I wanted to force him to be himself: a transplanted African from Sierra Leone living in Tennessee, not a prince or the son of a prince. More important, I didn't want this African man seeing his importance as it was reflected in other people's eyes, especially when so many of those people were white: thinking something is important just because white people say it is.

Somewhere along the way, though, Anthony Hopkins, who plays John Quincy Adams in the movie, began to think it was I who was Cinqué's descendant, and when he introduced me to his very British mother as such, I could see the delight in both their eyes. I still haven't told them I'm not quite who they think; I can't bear to disappoint them. But that puts me in the same position as my African colleague on the film.

I do have one famous ancestor, although he was never a slave. I'm related to Winston Churchill on my mother's side, or so I've been told. According to legend, we were in line for a sizable inheritance from the British crown, but the records proving our genealogy were destroyed when the church in which they were stored burned down. It's plausible only because my mother's family is white. That's not exactly right, but it's the shorthand we've always used. My maternal great-grandmother was white and though her husband, my great-grandfather, was black, her memory is the one that has endured. My mother's family ranges from light brown to lily-white in

color and there are some cousins, I'm told, who have disappeared completely into the white world. Even the ones who aren't lucky enough to be mistaken for anything but black are delighted by their proximity to whiteness. My grandmother was the one who always urged me to have as many white friends as possible, and I owe most of my friendships with whites (as well as my resistance to friendship with whites) to her.

Shortly after I changed my first name for the final time, I changed my middle name to Churchill. The "African" part of me was either shameful or a fraud (Cinqué was too weird, the African chieftom was a lie), and so this British legacy would prove my importance to the world.

One day, Clifton Johnson came to the set of *Amistad*. He founded the Amistad Research Center down in New Orleans—one of the biggest storehouses of research and historical documents on the *Amistad* case in the country. He wrote a letter early on, criticizing some of the liberties the film had taken with the historical record, and we were hoping that he'd change his mind. He and I had spoken only by phone, but we got along well, because we're both from the South and he reminded me of some old people in my family. I liked talking to him, because I don't get to interact with many black Southerners in Hollywood. He was touched when I told him this. I told him people like us have to stick together, and he agreed. I went to fetch him at the airport, but didn't notice him. He sneaked up to me and introduced himself with a laugh. He's as white as the day is long, and I was very embarrassed.

Arthur Abraham is one of the leading Mende scholars in the world, and he was on our set every day. He set the factual parameters for the movie's believable fiction. Anytime he was proven right about something he would say, "You see, you see," and flutter his eyelashes. I stuck him with the name "Reverend Doctor," because, I told him jokingly, I knew his sermons could heal. He laughed and threatened me with lashes.

He liked saying that he knew me. He liked calling me an African. He even tried to convince me that I was from Sierra Leone. During the slave trade, most of the Africans from Sierra Leone found themselves in South Carolina, on the Gullah islands, and then scattered all over the state. That was proof enough for him. Of course, I humored him and never let him know that it's not really possible. My father's family was from Mississippi, too far inland for a slave ship voyage with Mende cargo.

Shortly after this, my mother called with interesting news: *her* family is from Sierra Leone. She had come across some letters that proved that her great-grandfather had come to Barbados by way of West Africa. I was skeptical, but figured I'd call the Reverend Doctor to get his reaction. "You see, you see," he responded, convinced as ever. I envied his clarity, but it also made me wonder: What kind of clarity is really possible here in this jumbled mass of black and white?

CINQUÉ HENDERSON has written for *Newsweek* and *The Boston Globe* and is a creative executive at DreamWorks SKG.

Senator Ashcroft's longshot presidential bid.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

By Jason Zengerle

A devout Pentecostal Christian and the son of a minister, Senator John Ashcroft was raised to believe in gifts of the spirit, like speaking in tongues. But on a rainy Friday night in late November, when he addressed a coterie of party activists gathered at the Sheraton Washington Hotel for the Conservative Leadership Conference, the Missouri Republican spoke in a more conventional—and comprehensible—idiom: the language of cultural conservatism. In a flat tone, resonant with conviction if not necessarily passion, Ashcroft ticked off the stands—on national education standards, abortion, the National Endowment for the Arts—that recently led an admiring George Will to label Ashcroft the "pinup candidate" for

social conservatives in 2000. Folksily eschewing the lectern and standing to its side, Ashcroft relied on a clip-on microphone to deliver the pitch he hopes will make him a serious presidential contender. "I think it's time for us to reassert the principle that the values of the people should be imposed on government, rather than the values of government imposed on the people," Ashcroft declared over the din of clinking silverware, fighting a losing battle with overdone portions of filet mignon for the crowd's attention.

The filet mignon, though, was the least of Ashcroft's worries. Waiting in the wings to give the next speech that evening was Steve Forbes—the man who, after running solely as a flat-taxer during his 1996 presi-

dential bid, is focusing his 2000 campaign on social issues, like partial-birth abortion. Forbes will not be the only one gunning for Ashcroft's natural base: as the 2000 Republican primaries near, other heretofore socially agnostic or moderate Republicans will also be reinventing themselves as dyed-in-the-wool social conservatives. This is generally good news for social conservatives, whose traditionally high turnout in GOP primaries now makes them the most sought-after constituency in the nomination race. But it's not such good news for Ashcroft who, as the most authentic social conservative currently receiving serious consideration for the nomination, now finds himself facing stiff competition for his constituency.

Ashcroft will do what he can to prevent his base from splintering, but the essence of his incipient presidential strategy is an aggressive gamble: if the fiscal conservatives are intent on targeting his base, he'll go after theirs. Like most modern-day Republicans, Ashcroft is laying claim to the Reagan legacy, literally: among the first people he consulted about a presidential run were old Reagan hands like Mike Deaver and Lyn Nofziger. Ashcroft may lack Reaganesque charms—he has a wooden speaking style, and he is mad-deningly on-message during interviews—but many GOP insiders believe he is as likely an heir as any. Of course, that may say more about the wide open nature of the Republican field than it does about Ashcroft's viability as a national candidate.

Although Ashcroft's national reputation—if he can be said to have one—is as a political ally of the religious right, he rose through Missouri state politics by bridging the gap between his party's social and economic wings, and by ingratiating himself with his party's more moderate leaders. Ashcroft owes his start in politics to two pillars of the Missouri GOP establishment: Kit Bond and Jack Danforth. In 1972, Bond, then the newly elected governor, made the 30-year-old Ashcroft the youngest state auditor in Missouri history. And in 1974, Danforth, the state attorney general, hired Ashcroft to work in his office alongside other up-and-coming Republicans, including

future Congressman Tom Coleman and future Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas. When Danforth decided to run for the U.S. Senate in 1976, Ashcroft successfully ran to succeed him as attorney general. Using his two terms as attorney general to boost his state-wide stature, Ashcroft cultivated a conservative reputation by waging a high-profile legal battle against a federally mandated, costly busing program to desegregate Kansas City and St. Louis schools. "There was this image of Ashcroft not quite standing in the schoolhouse door but giving voice to Missourians' complaints," remarks an old Ashcroft acquaintance.

In 1984, after Bond had served the maximum two terms as governor, the GOP establishment anointed

Ashcroft his successor. Ashcroft would serve as governor for two terms as well, both of them characterized by a go-slow approach and a focus on fiscal issues. While Ashcroft was able to maintain the state's AAA bond rating and keep its tax burden the forty-ninth lowest in the nation, he did so by cutting state services by about \$1 billion. "He had a caretaker view of government which didn't serve well in times of crisis," grouses Harriet Woods, a Democrat who had a combative relationship with Ashcroft as his lieutenant governor for four years.

Still, when Ashcroft left the governor's mansion in 1993, he was at the height of his popularity. Under Ashcroft's watch, the state began to lag in key areas like education—falling to thirty-sixth in the nation in teacher pay and forty-seventh in the amount of money per person spent on higher education—but Missourians were happy with their low taxes. "He was probably the first governor who recognized that the less you did the more popular you were," quips a Democratic state senator. After a brief stint in a private law practice, Ashcroft returned to politics when Danforth decided to retire from the Senate; and in 1994, he easily won the race for Danforth's seat, receiving 60 percent of the vote and carrying all 114 counties. In the Senate, where he's joined Bond, Ashcroft enjoys a reputation as a conservative activist. He bucked the party leadership in 1995 by bringing a proposed constitutional amendment on term limits to the Senate floor, and he was one of the



JOHN ASHCROFT BY ROBERT GROSSMAN FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

few Republicans to vote against the budget deal this past spring. But he has also accepted party discipline when necessary, and his team play has been rewarded: his provision to allow states to use faith-based organizations to provide social services became part of the 1996 welfare reform legislation; and he's a principal sponsor of three of the Republican leadership's "Top Ten" legislative priorities for the 105th Congress.

Of course, Ashcroft's inoffensive if unspectacular career in government is not the primary reason for the current presidential speculation. What has given rise to a potential Ashcroft candidacy is the support he enjoys among social conservatives, who view Ashcroft as a fellow traveler. An active member of the Assemblies of God, Ashcroft does not smoke, drink, gamble, or dance. He's an accomplished gospel singer who endeared himself to Missouri social conservatives by performing in churches all over the state. Even in Washington he has kept his faith: on weekdays he holds morning prayer meetings in his office, and on Sundays he attends Assembly of God services in an underground movie theater at Union Station.

It's precisely the combination of government experience and personal faith that makes Ashcroft so attractive to a number of prominent social conservatives. In their eyes, Ashcroft is a true believer who, because he doesn't scare moderates, is actually electable. "This is a guy who could go on the Jay Leno show ... and play a couple of country tunes with the Oak Ridge Boys," enthuses one political consultant. With this sort of thing in mind, Paul Weyrich, as early as 1989, was privately touting Ashcroft as the social conservatives' best bet to recapture the party from the moderates who had just elected George Bush. James C. Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, recently devoted two segments of his national radio program to an interview with Ashcroft—describing Ashcroft to his millions of listeners as "a ray of light in Washington." In September, Pat Robertson invited Ashcroft to give the keynote speech at the Christian Coalition's annual meeting in Atlanta. Both men are said to support Ashcroft's nascent candidacy.

But that doesn't mean he has the social conservative vote locked up. Ashcroft's performance at the Christian Coalition meeting was supposed to be his coming-out party: "They tried to stage it in a way so that Ashcroft would grab the headlines like, 'Ashcroft Wows Social Conservatives,'" explains a person familiar with the event's planning. "But Ashcroft gave an uninspiring speech, and Forbes got something like ten standing ovations." Ashcroft's poor showing in Atlanta is symptomatic of a larger problem he faces: how to translate the support of the social conservative wing's leadership into the support of its rank and file. Short of one Machiavellian strategy being discussed—in which the Family Research Council's Gary Bauer would launch his own presidential candidacy and then, two weeks before the Iowa caucuses, withdraw from the race and

throw his support to another social conservative candidate—it's doubtful that the rank and file will all vote one way.

Recognizing this, Ashcroft is looking for votes elsewhere. His top legislative priority—a bill that would make Social Security taxes deductible—is geared to appeal to fiscal conservatives. In addition, Ashcroft is developing his own flat-tax proposal that he plans to unveil in the coming months. He continues to push for enactment of term limits, which he hopes will resonate with Perot voters. And even on issues that are traditionally identified with social conservatives—like opposition to Most Favored Nation status for China or attempts to defund the NEA—Ashcroft tries to couch his stances in ways that will also appeal to other camps. On China, Ashcroft does not focus on human rights or persecuted Christians, but bases his opposition to MFN on the hard-headed realist grounds that China should be punished for its proliferation of nuclear weapons. On the NEA, Ashcroft strikes a populist note, complaining that "the average guy [who] wants to go down and see Garth Brooks at the country concert, he doesn't get a federal subsidy, but the silk-stocking crowd wants to go to watch the ballet or the symphony orchestra, they get a subsidy."

As part of this effort to broaden his base, Ashcroft's aides are distancing their boss from the most extreme positions associated with some of his social conservative allies. Ashcroft himself is wary of talking about his religious background, at least to people who aren't obviously like-minded. When I ask him a softball question about how his faith has influenced his politics—a topic I've heard him speak about at length to social conservatives—he gives a quick response about how it provides him "a sense of compassion," and then offers a long and nervous disclaimer about how "it's against my religion to impose my religion on others."

Ashcroft's strategy has one salient flaw, however: it is risky for a candidate of such low national name recognition to cast himself as healer of the breach. To concede even a fraction of the social conservative vote would make an Ashcroft nomination highly implausible. Already, there's some grumbling among social conservatives that Ashcroft is spending too much time building bridges to other bases and too little fighting for his natural base, particularly against those who are courting that base for the first time. "Steve Forbes can't legitimately say that he's been fighting the good fight for this community for the past ten years," says one prominent social conservative. "You can say the opposite. He's kicked this constituency in the teeth for a better part of the decade. If I'm John Ashcroft, I'd point that out." The same conservative continues, "Ashcroft's only bet is as the pro-family, religious candidate. Where else does he have to go? Does he go to the country club? Does he go to the board room? He's only got one base." Clearly, Ashcroft is hoping that's not the case. •

DISARMED AND DANGEROUS

By Anatol Lieven

There are those in the West who still debate the depth of Russia's military decline. But the Chechens, who know the Russian Army better than anyone, are in doubt. In May 1995, I met the deputy commander of the Chechen separatist forces in Shelli, Said Hassan. I asked Hassan if he worried that the Russians might cut off the supply corridors the Chechens were using to smuggle in arms. "Don't you worry about that," he told me. "There will always be a corridor, because the Russian soldiers here sell us their own guns and ammunition in return for money or vodka. As long as Ivan is here, there will also be guns for us to shoot at him! Sometimes even commanders bribe us not to shoot at their units, to shoot at their comrades somewhere else instead."

Strange things indeed are going on in Russia's military. The war in Chechnya is over—lost, badly, by the forces of Boris Yeltsin. Casualties continue to mount in the Russian Navy, where—as with the army—the enemy is an internal one. In despair at their lack of pay and inability to feed their families, naval officers are killing themselves. In July, *Izvestia* reported that 141 officers of the Northern Fleet attempted suicide in 1996. In response, the navy itself was obliged to admit that there were at least 32 suicide attempts—many of them successful—among the officers of that fleet, which includes most of Russia's nuclear missile submarines.

Numerous suicides were also reported in Russia's land-based strategic missile forces, and in civilian agencies that oversee the Russian nuclear state. On October 30, 1996, Professor Vladimir Nechay, director of a formerly secret state nuclear research station at Chelyabinsk-70, shot himself because he hadn't received any money to pay his staff or maintain the center's physical plant. Several newspapers suggested that he may have even borrowed money from "commercial structures"—most likely Mafia-linked—which he was then unable to repay.

Though the crack-up of Soviet forces received world-

wide attention at the end of the cold war, the crisis in its successor organization, the Russian military, is only now becoming apparent. To this day the Russian Army is not really a Russian army at all, but a disorganized fragment of the old Soviet armed forces. Acute shortages of funds means that the state can afford neither to maintain its existing forces nor to reduce them—because reductions in modern armies actually raise costs in the short term. (The savings come later.) And, most important, the Russian state and society today are so corrupt, so atomized, so cynical, and so individualist that they inevitably produce cynical and demoralized soldiers. "Who are our commanders?" a Russian soldier in Chechnya asked. "Thieves who steal from us, then send us to die to cover up their own political mistakes."

For the West, the collapse of the Russian Army is a classic good news, bad news story. The good news is that the traditional threat of an aggressive cross-border strike by Russian conventional forces has all but vanished. In the foreseeable future, it is unlikely the Kremlin could muster effective fighting forces for anything beyond small-scale military operations. The bad news is that—as the suicide epidemic in Russia's nuclear-armed Northern Fleet ominously suggests—the more anarchic the Russian military becomes, the more of a destabilizing factor it may be, both inside Russia and in the Eurasian land mass that Russia dominates.

This is true for both organizational and geopolitical reasons. Organizationally, officers who are not paid regularly are that much more likely to peddle dangerous weapons—even nuclear weapons. Geopolitically, Russia's military crisis could contribute to a dangerous power vacuum in Russia's neighborhood. A force too weak to attack others is a good thing; a force too weak to defend Russia itself isn't. If, for example, China emerges as the greatest threat to U.S. interests in the first half of the next century, then a Russia reduced to impotence in Central Asia may become a liability. The U.S. has been obliged to use Russia as a counter to even greater threats to international order over the past two hundred years. We may one day need her again.

It is also too soon to discount the possibility that a humiliated and hungry army will someday become an agent of political instability within Russia itself. So far, the officer corps has been politically quiescent—to an

ANATOL LIEVEN was a correspondent for *The Times* (London) in the former Soviet Union from 1990 to 1996. He now writes for *The Financial Times*. His latest book, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power*, is to be published by Yale University Press next spring.

extraordinary degree—and it seems unlikely that the army as a whole would initiate some sort of revolt. But that does not mean that if extra-constitutional struggles for power developed among the political elites, parts of the army might not take a decisive hand—as they often did in the eighteenth century.

Exacerbating this danger is the growing class division between officers and the new political elite. The officer corps is being drawn more and more from the lower ranks of Russian society; the prestige and economic rewards of a military career may be shrinking, but they are often better than the alternative opportunities available to the working class and the peasantry in civilian life. The alienation of the officer corps from the economic and political elite could be a potent source of danger for the democratizing Russian state in the future.

As it stands, the Russian military is simply a devourer and wrecker of Russian youth. This is, above all, due to the infamous practice of *dyedovshchina*—the exploitation, frequently with loathsome cruelty, of the newly joined conscripts by the “grand-fathers,” the older conscripts, and the volunteer soldiers. This practice is to blame for a scandalous wave of murders (whether from beatings as part of *dyedovshchina*, or in retaliations against it by junior soldiers driven to desperation), suicides, and nervous and physical breakdowns in the Soviet and Russian armed forces. During 1995, according to the Russian Military Procuracy’s own figures, 423 soldiers committed suicide, mainly because of *dyedovshchina*; in 1996, the number grew to 543. Of course, this does not count cases where suicide (or murder) was covered up and described as “accidental death.” In 1996, 1,071 soldiers were murdered, mostly by other soldiers.

This affects “elite” divisions as much as ordinary ones. In November, the military prosecutor’s office announced that an official investigation of the Interior Ministry’s Dzerzhinsky Division, one of the security mainstays of Yeltsin’s administration, had revealed more than 300 cases of aggravated beatings

and oppression, including a soldier being forced to eat a rat. In this year alone, 180 men have deserted the division.

Dyedovshchina, it should be noted, is not just “hazing.” Such traditions can be extremely nasty, but they have some purpose in creating group solidarity (usually, by uniting soldiers in their hatred of a sergeant major). *Dyedovshchina* is something quite different. It humiliates men, weakens them physically, and breaks them down without “building them up.” It is a general war of the strong against the weak, and it produces units riven by internal hatreds. If the frequent peacetime reports of

bullied soldiers turning on their persecutors and killing them are accurate, then they must mean that a good many Soviet and Russian soldiers in Afghanistan and Chechnya died in action from a bullet in the back.

When officers have had the will to try to stop this practice, they have often lacked the means. This reflects, chiefly, the fact that the Russian military now lacks a really good corps of noncommissioned officers. Even “elite” units consist mainly of conscripts. In September 1994, General Eduard Vorobyev told me that “the weakest element in our army is the sergeants ... we are now planning and thinking about a return to the kind of sergeants we had in the Great Patriotic War [World War II]. But we are hindered by lack of money ...”

These are not the words of a greedy soldier looking to buy a few new expensive tanks. The lack of money has effectively rendered impossible the transformation of the Russian Army from a conscript force to a professional one—something the great majority of Russian officers believe is long overdue. Yeltsin promised such a transformation before the 1996 presidential elections, but this turned out to be pure electioneering; he promptly disowned the stance once the election was safely won. By last year the army had recruited only 180,000 “contract servicemen” (or “regulars”)—100,000 shy of the target. There were no plans to recruit more, and of the 180,000 new soldiers, about 100,000 were women—overwhelmingly the wives of



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

officers and noncommissioned officers, serving in a variety of auxiliary jobs so that they could earn enough to keep their families alive. So low was the pay being offered to these *kontraktniki*, and so often was it in arrears that, as a Russian officer admitted to me gloomily, "we can really only attract people who no one else would ever employ."

As the situation deteriorates, threatening both Russian civil society and Russia's many neighbors, there has been talk of reform. Since the replacement of the discredited General Pavel Grachev as defense minister in June 1996, the armed forces have been headed by reformists who embrace the twin goals of downsizing and professionalization. In the long run, they hope, the Russian Army might start to look something like the French Army of recent decades—an army with conscripts who serve as "garrison" troops, and act as a reserve, all backed by a smaller number of mobile professional units that serve as "intervention forces."

In theory, these small mobile forces could be used for engagements with Russia's weaker neighbors, whether to replace unfriendly governments or to defend local Russian civilians. However, even if the Russians could establish such units, they would never be strong enough to face a large country like Ukraine, nor could they effectively fight small but intensely patriotic and united ones like the Baltic states. Involvement in major wars beyond the former Soviet Union's borders would be altogether unthinkable, except in the role of very junior partners to the United States.

As for the garrison troops, former Defense Minister Igor Rodionov envisioned an army with 16 divisions; General Alexander Lebed, during his time as National Security Chief, suggested reducing the number to twelve, in order to make each one stronger. Assuming these divisions were not in fact fully manned—which has largely been the case in recent years—this would put the Russian Army (not counting missile troops, Interior Ministry forces, and so on) barely ahead of the Turks in terms of real effectiveness. Russian military officials estimate that the transition to a professional force of 1.2 million would require another 40 trillion rubles; the total 1997 military budget is just 104.3 trillion rubles. The president's staff and senior Russian economic officials reportedly met this proposal with mockery—an absolutely preposterous notion given Russia's present fiscal circumstances.

But even if the reformers had their way, serious problems would remain. The Russian military does not even vaguely resemble a set of integrated armed forces. Instead, it is an eccentric, quarreling, and dissolute family of forces. This is partly by design: Yeltsin has played the Interior Ministry off the Defense Ministry, strengthening the former in order to keep Russian security forces divided and preserve his own grip on power. But as Chechnya conclusively showed, the Interior Ministry forces are neither equipped nor trained for large-scale warfare.

Indeed, the critical weakness not addressed in the

reform plans is poor training and equipment. Even after the Chechen war began, the entire air force in 1995 received only ten new fighters and bombers. (The figure for 1993 and 1994 together was 23.) In 1996, the year the Chechen war ended (in part because of the inefficient and inadequate use of Russian air power), the Russian Air Force purchased not one—not one!—new plane or helicopter. The proportion of combat-ready planes dropped to 53 percent. All services have been reduced to cannibalization of spare parts to keep at least some equipment operative. During my various visits to the Russian lines in Chechnya, I saw literally dozens of trucks and armored personnel carriers standing immobile, their tires or wheels removed as replacements for those of other vehicles.

While this demoralized and ill-equipped fighting force poses no real threat to the United States, its desperate need for money does. The lucrative sale of arms and matériel for weapons of mass destruction is quite obviously continuing despite protests from the U.S. and other countries. And the danger of proliferation seems ever more realistic, given the globalization of the Russian Mafia and continued terrorism by small, splintered, and fanatical religious and political groups, such as the group that bombed New York's World Trade Center, or the Japanese religious terrorist group, Aum Shinrikyo.

Most American officials remain preoccupied with the direct military and geopolitical threats Russia poses, and the distribution of U.S. intelligence spending reflects that emphasis. At present, some 85 percent of U.S. intelligence spending goes to defense intelligence, mostly directed at satellite and electronic surveillance. These are of course important projects, but it may be time to shift more resources into human intelligence and proactive approaches. The United States has scored some notable successes in this field in the former Soviet Union—for example, the purchase of Kazakh plutonium to make sure that it did not reach the outside world, and the purchase of MiG-29s from Moldova to prevent Iran from buying them. But more effort needs to be made to keep Russian scientists employed on projects other than weapons research for rogue nations.

Concentrating on the direct threats posed by the Russian military, on the other hand, merely makes the Russian government look bad—at a time when its cooperation is vital to combating the very real threat of weapons proliferation and terrorism. Russian official help against the Russian international crime and smuggling menace may have been very limited, but without it the Western task would look almost hopeless. The debate both on the nature of the Russian threat and the balance of U.S. security interests will of course continue. Sadly, it might take an act of terrorism—a bomb built from materials originating in Russia—to force a serious rethinking in the West. As far as the United States is concerned, the weakest Russian army of this century may yet prove the most troublesome. •

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Of Human Bondage

Uniquely, attractively, Steven Spielberg's career is scored with deep changes of intent. Mostly he has worked in the realm of popular pictures, sweeping the world with success after success by realizing juvenile fantasies with a mature talent. But sometimes he employs that talent on mature subjects. *The Color Purple*, to some degree, grasped troubling matters in black American society. *Schindler's List*, to the gratifying surprise of many of us, dramatized monumentally the mystery of good in the midst of the mystery of evil. Now Spielberg presents a film out of nineteenth-century American history that again demonstrates his extraordinary gifts.

Amistad (DreamWorks) tells a story so significant that its relative obscurity up to now is hard to understand. (After famine, a feast: an opera called *Amistad* has just appeared in Chicago.) To compress it: in 1839, on board the Spanish ship *Amistad*, bound from Havana to a slave port with a cargo of black Africans, the recently captured slaves revolted, led by a man called Cinqué, killed most of the Spanish crew, and ordered the two survivors to return them to Africa. Before very long the *Amistad* was commandeered by an American naval vessel and taken to Connecticut. After a hearing, the slaves were put on trial. The U.S. government's argument was that the slaves were property and should be returned to their owners. The defense, quick and hot, was that they ought to be returned to Africa.

The case tangled with a Spanish-American treaty and with sharp domestic controversy. It drew immense attention in this country, along with visitors to the

New Haven prison to see the blacks, as a burning issue for both pro- and anti-slavery forces; and President Van Buren tried to walk a tightrope to avoid offending either group in his upcoming election campaign. The Federal District Court held that the slaves should be returned to Africa, a ruling upheld by the Circuit Court. The government then appealed to the Supreme Court to reverse the decision, and the defense was joined by John Quincy Adams, aged 74, the former president, and now a member of Congress. The defense won. The blacks were returned to Africa (where, in fact, ironies awaited).

To deal with this complex story, Spielberg had of course to condense it. With a screenplay credited to David Franzoni, which adds at least one fictional character and alters some real ones, the result is inevitably incomplete and in some regards hyperbolic. But the film conveys the mass and weight of this national, international, yet scorchingly personal drama.

Without in the least slighting Spielberg's concerns with the materials as such, for me a chief benefit of the screenplay is that it offers splendid opportunities for his filmmaking gifts. Clearly he was building his film on texture. Aided by his superb cinematographer, Janusz Kaminski, who did *Schindler's List*, and by his designer, Ruth Carter, who provided almost palpable clothes, Spielberg puts people before us, not costumed actors, and he puts us among those people.

The very first shot, an intense close-up of a black man, dirt-caked and wet, as lightning flashes, as he struggles to pull his shackles loose in the ship's hold, not only crystallizes the theme; it seizes us with verity, the sense that a vital filmmaking talent is striking toward the truth. Scene after scene confirms this feeling—small deployments of groups that vary the patterns we didn't know we hoped not to see, large swells of pleasure like the first shot of a courtroom in afternoon light, which persuades us that the world was real and people had eyes back then, too. I can't remember a stronger sense of my presence in the past since Bergman's *The Virgin Spring*.

As agon, as embodiment of the struggles involved in the slave trade, in its meanings for American and European civilization, the film depends greatly on the performance of Cinqué, and here Spielberg's choice can only be called brilliant. Djimon Hounsou is a native of Benin who has been living in Paris and has had small roles in French and American films. He is a magnificent-looking man, but it is his spirit, more than his physique, that fulfills the role. Courage, anger, the dignity of a slave who despises his masters—all these come from Hounsou as emanations, not "creations." If you think the film exaggerates Cinqué's bearing and being, read William Cullen Bryant's contemporary poem about him, which begins "Chained in a foreign land he stood, / A man of giant frame." Hounsou becomes the Atlas on whom the cosmos of this drama rests.

The only other character of comparable importance is, naturally, John Quincy

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Boogie Nights. The L.A. porno flick world in the late 1970s, treated in a multi-stranded epic manner. Gritty, but more than gritty. (Reviewed 11/10/97) **The Sweet Hereafter.** In a small snowbound town a school bus skids into a lake. Many children are lost. We explore the town later, with Ian Holm, a lawyer, as legal action is weighed. Fine acting, subtle character shadings. (12/8/97) **Will It Snow for Christmas?** Another in the fine French cinema line about rural life. In postwar Provence a woman struggles to raise her seven children. Aching muscles, stubborn spirit. (12/15/97) **The Wings of the Dove.** The Henry James novel tailored somewhat neatly for the screen, but the two leading actors, Linus Roache and Helena Bonham Carter, are excellent, (12/1/97)—SK

Adams. The writing of this role has been touched, invitingly though visibly, by theater. Some of Adams's qualities have been shaped into what might be called a George Arliss part. In the 1930s Arliss used to play crotchety older men, including historical figures (Disraeli, Wellington, Richelieu) who were seemingly out of things but who were discreetly observant and who stepped forward at the end to settle all difficulties. Anthony Hopkins plays this role here, cleverly clothed in Adams-ness, and from his first moments we get the savor of a fine actor relishing a damned good part. Our first glimpse is of Adams dozing in the House yet making a keen reply when it's needed. We see him at home fussing with the plants in his hothouse. After the defense wins the New Haven trial, we know the government must appeal because Adams has so far ap-

peared only peripherally. The structure of the film, as well as the facts of history, require that the case go to the Supreme Court so that Adams can flourish. He does. He argues. He wins. Hopkins, as Adams and as himself, is magisterial.

Morgan Freeman shines—he's an actor capable of reticent shining—as an ex-slave who now is head of an anti-slavery group in the North. Nigel Hawthorne (of *The Madness of King George*) is smilingly obsequious as Van Buren. Pete Postlethwaite (of *In the Name of the Father*) bites like a bulldog as the principal prosecutor. Matthew McConaughey does what he can with the sketchiest main character, the first defense lawyer.

The only women visible in the film are some of the missionaries who come to the prison to save the black men's souls. A questionable sequence results from the

gift of an illustrated Bible to one of the black men, who figures out, from the picture, the relevance of the story of Jesus. The contradiction in a Christian society that owned slaves would have been lucid enough without this sequence. But Spielberg's weakest choice is the John Williams score, which sometimes floats wordless choruses under big moments. The moments might have been even bigger with less music.

Nonetheless, *Amistad*, shortcomings and all, is solid, engrossing. While it's in progress, it envelops us; paradoxically, when it's finished, it seems to stand free, like a strong sculpture. Spielberg, the master of film-world success, shows yet again that he is master of much more than that success. In both aspects, and because of both aspects, he is invaluable. •

John Quincy Adams, *La Amistad*, and democracy in America.

The Mandarin and the Rebel

BY SEAN WILENTZ

I.

When Congressman John Quincy Adams died in February 1848, masses of Americans mourned. At the Capitol, where Adams was fatally stricken and where his body lay in state, thousands of somber citizens lined up, uninvited, to file past his velvet-draped coffin. Untold thousands more crowded alongside the railroad tracks all the way from Washington to Boston, to witness the train carrying Adams's remains home. Some of Adams's oldest and fiercest political antagonists, from the conservative Whig Daniel Webster to the hard-money Democrat Thomas Hart Benton, wrote tributes. Even the Southern leaders of what Adams in his later years contemptuously called "the slaveocracy" paid chivalrous tribute to the departed patriarch.

To be sure, not every slave-holder forgave Adams. Some recalcitrants and fire-eaters praised him grudgingly and dubiously as, in the Virginian Henry Wise's words, "the acutest, the astutest, the archest enemy of Southern slavery that ever existed." Other slave-holders praised him not at all. Neither was every Northern Jacksonian overcome by sadness at Adams's passing. Shortly after the funeral, the radical free-soil Democratic

editor Walt Whitman (temporarily working in New Orleans) remarked, in a parting jab, that although Adams was "a virtuous man—a learned man . . . he was not a man of the People."

But Adams, the anxious and austere failed president, had gained something that had eluded the other anxious and austere failed American president of the early republic, his father: he had gained, thanks to his anti-slavery activities, a popular following. Five years before his

John Quincy Adams:
A Public Life, A Private Life
by Paul C. Nagel
(Knopf, 428 pp., \$30)

Amistad
A Film by Steven Spielberg
(DreamWorks Pictures)

death, in the summer of 1843, Adams basked in a tumultuous response, in town after town, when he toured anti-slavery areas of western New York and Ohio; even more remarkably, he received similar receptions when he headed back East through northern Kentucky and Pennsylvania. The public grief later expressed at his death was exceeded in nineteenth-century America only by the outpouring for the martyred Lincoln.

Popularity came as a delightful surprise to the old man. Shortly before his controversial election to the presidency in 1824, Adams remarked, with good reason, that the public perceived him as "a gloomy misanthropist." He never claimed to have mastered the common touch, and for most of his life he took a dim view of political leaders who did. How, then, could such a man surmount the disappointments and the deep melancholy of his White House years (not to mention his early political upbringing) and go on to become a beloved maverick congressman and a fiery crusader against evil? It is one of the more important puzzles of early American political history. I say important, because no American bridged the age of Washington and the age of Lincoln in the way that John Quincy Adams did. And, with the simultaneous appearance of Paul C. Nagel's biography of Adams and Steven Spielberg's film *Amistad* (which includes a forceful portrayal of one of the aging Adams's finest moments), it is a puzzle that may matter to more than the historians. It should.

Beginning with his participation in 1781, when he was fourteen, in the Continental Congress's legation to the court of Catherine the Great, and ending with his final, mumbled vote against the Mexican War in the thirtieth United

States Congress, Adams resided at or near the pinnacle of national politics. His long and prominent public career, as recorded in his huge and magnificent diary (itself a neglected treasure of American letters), perfectly exemplified the transition from the Federalists' elitist, deferential republic to the mass-based, democratic republic of the Democrats and the Whigs. How did Adams negotiate this transition, especially after his crushing defeat at the hands of Andrew Jackson in 1828? The answer to this question sheds light on the changing character of American government and, in turn, on the democratic origins of the Civil War.

It also helps to unravel the enigma that is John Quincy Adams. No American political life of the early republic was, on its surface, more ironic than Adams's; and no political personality was more mysterious. As James Monroe's brilliant Secretary of State, Adams was the most successful of the new nation's expansionists—but he went on to denounce the annexation of Texas, the Mexican War, and what became known as Manifest Destiny, ascribing each of them to the malevolent designs of the hated Slave Power. A prominent early exponent of the positive uses of national political power, he would end up trying to check and to obstruct the power of the slave-holders. Adams's first success in electoral politics came in 1802, after his embittered father, turned out of the presidency by Jefferson two years earlier, decided to retire from politics and let the Jeffersonians ruin the country. His first failure came after he appeared actually to have joined forces with the Jeffersonians (a step that, in the long run, probably saved his political career). Later, as Secretary of State, Adams put his political future at some risk by defending the bellicose American military commander in Florida—his future nemesis, a general named Andrew Jackson.

The longer Adams lived, the more the ironies and the mysteries of his life seemed to multiply. He was one of the only genuine intellectuals ever to occupy the White House, and he was one of his era's most high-minded opponents of party strife and demagogic electioneering; but in 1828 he allowed his political friends to take the low road in his reelection campaign against Jackson by printing scurrilous and inflammatory propaganda. The stuff was so clumsy and outrageous that one of Adams's field captains, Thurlow Weed of New York, a true pol, refused to distribute it to the voters in his district, lest he cost Adams votes. Thereafter, humiliated by his defeat, Adams withdrew behind what his son

Charles Francis Adams called his "Iron Mask," the forbidding demeanor that made him a cipher even to his closest friends and family—only to emerge in the 1830s and 1840s as a rebarbative, witty, and amazingly resourceful spokesman for a cause that he had hitherto ignored: anti-slavery. He was no "literary gentleman," Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his journal, but "a bruiser," "an old roué who cannot live on slops, but must have sulphuric acid in his tea." A lifelong nationalist and constitutionalist, Adams then agitated sectional issues that eventually severed the Union and plunged the nation into Civil War—much as he foresaw they would.

In short, John Quincy Adams's political life seems not to have added up. And yet (with apologies to Leon Wieseltier) a life that does not add up is not necessarily an ironic life. Adams's achievement was to contain within himself things that did not go together—and to do so with high seriousness and without a whit of cynicism. Among the things that he contained, after 1828, was a new-found appreciation for the possibilities of democratic politics as a vehicle for his overriding personal ambition, which was to be regarded as a courageous, enlightened, and virtuous political leader, a great and good man in the classical mold. He resolved his apparent contradictions by becoming, in effect, America's egalitarian Cicero. And he did so not by his own lights alone, but thanks to the proddings of the sorts of democratic movements that, early in his career, he would have deemed utterly disreputable.

II.

Paul C. Nagel's interpretation of Adams's paradoxes is revealed in his book's subtitle. Looking closely at Adams's agonized private life, Nagel finds emotional tensions that both hampered and animated Adams's public career. This is psychobiography of a pretty unreconstructed sort. The strongest thing to be said in favor of Nagel's approach—it might be called the serotonin theory of history—is that it has led him to study, from start to finish, the manuscript of Adams's diary, which has yet to be published in its entirety. The historian Allan Nevins (whose drastically abridged edition of the 46-year diary, published in 1928, is the best introduction to the riches of this American Pepys) observed that "in all American political literature, there is no record of the kind which approaches [it] in interest and value."

Nagel quotes regularly, and often insufficiently, from the diary's sometimes mordant and sometimes charming observations about matters small (the punctil-

ious revelries of the Russian court, where "everything moves like a piece of clockwork"; church singing in Washington that "lap'd me in Elysium") and large (the negotiation of the Treaty of Ghent, the Missouri Compromise, Jackson's election). Above all, Nagel cites the diary's most tortured passages in order to support his two basic contentions: that, until the 1830s, Adams suffered from chronic bouts of what today would be called clinical depression; and that Adams's struggles with his demons fundamentally shaped his political thoughts and actions.

Adams certainly had reasons to be depressed, in ways common to talented young men of great expectations. He was born in 1767 at the family home in Braintree (now Quincy), in Massachusetts, John and Abigail Adams's eldest son. The heroic tumults of the American Revolution, instigated and led by his father and his father's friends, dominated his early childhood. (When he was five, he witnessed from a Braintree hillside the distant battle of Bunker Hill, the scene of the glorious death of the patriot Dr. Joseph Warren, who happened also to be the Adams family physician.) In 1778, he accompanied his father to Paris, where John Adams was posted as Minister to France; thereafter he and his father moved to Amsterdam and then to Leyden, in accordance with changes in the elder Adams's assignments.

Johnny Adams's serious demeanor and excellent command of French led to his appointment, in 1781, as secretary to Francis Dana, the American minister to St. Petersburg (where all courtiers and diplomats spoke French). Following a journey through Scandinavia and northern Germany, he rejoined his father in 1783, and served as a secretary during the treaty negotiations in Paris that concluded the American Revolution. Two years later, young Adams returned home to complete his college education at Harvard. In 1790, after three years of study with the eminent jurist Theophilus Parsons, he began his own legal practice. And throughout these years (and for many years to come), Adams's parents made it harshly clear that they would tolerate nothing less than greatness from their fortunate first-born son. "You came into life with advantages which will disgrace you if your success is mediocre," John Adams warned in 1794, adding that "if you do not rise to the head not only of your profession, but of your country, it will be owing to your own *Laziness, Slovenliness, and Obstinacy.*"

JQA (as he began to style himself, to avoid getting confused with his father) sometimes hinted that he would have preferred a quiet bookish existence to a career in law and politics; and some of the happiest and most fruitful times in

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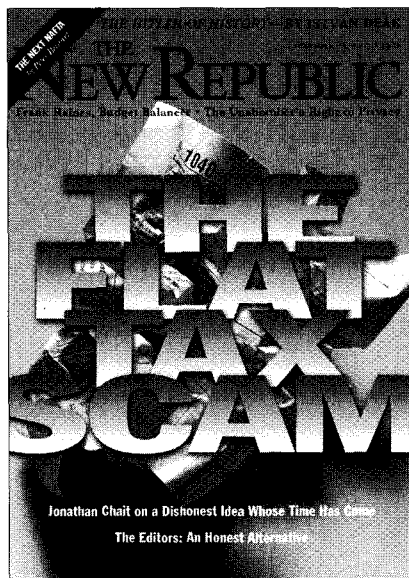
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AND ANALYSIS, GOVERNMENT ... AND

his life would come from his reading, writing, and teaching. With his translations of Christoph Martin Wieland and Friedrich von Gentz, and his traveler's account, *Letters on Silesia*, Adams established, virtually on his own, the serious study in the United States of German language and literature. Although he would never complete the literary masterpiece that he thought was in him (unless one counts the diary as his masterpiece, which it is), he did write plenty of competent, second-rate verse as well as some strong pieces of dramatic and literary criticism, showing a special affinity for Shakespearean studies. A stint as the first Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory at Harvard, from 1805 to 1809, brought him great satisfaction (though he initially found his students ignorant, his lecturing chores burdensome, and the Harvard treasurer inept at disbursing his salary on time).

Yet JQA's literary and linguistic talents also recommended him for diplomatic and political leadership in the fledgling republic. His pseudonymous "Publicola" essays—written in 1791 to defend his father, and his father's political alter ego Edmund Burke, and the principles of orderly government, against the democratic diatribes of Jefferson and Paine—were so artful and learned that most readers assumed that John Adams was their author. Subsequent essays by the young polemicist, attacking the erratic French envoy Edmond Genet and defending the Washington administration's foreign policy, gained President Washington's admiration, and in 1794 (to Vice President John Adams's delight), JQA, aged 27, was appointed America's Minister to Holland. At Washington's insistence, the younger Adams remained in the diplomatic corps even after the elder Adams ascended to the presidency in 1797. (Father and son had fretted over the appearance of favoritism.) Only after Jefferson's election did JQA again come home—where he quickly threw himself into politics, winning election to the Massachusetts state senate in 1802 and to the United States Senate a year later.

Under the burden of his parents' desires (and, after 1797, under the burden of a tense marriage to Louisa Johnson, the daughter of an American consul), JQA went to pieces from time to time. The evidence in the diary, as retrieved by Nagel, is unmistakable. Beginning in 1788, when his miseries grew so severe that he had to withdraw temporarily from Parsons's law academy ("God of Heavens . . . take me from this world before I curse the day of my birth"), Adams repeatedly succumbed to fits of anxiety and remorse. He would reproach himself mercilessly

ing strenuously. (He became an avid swimmer.) As he grew older, he also mastered a public demeanor of icy restraint. Nagel finds that, contrary to the conventional historical wisdom, the private JQA, surrounded by close friends and family members, was an amiable and appetitive man, with passions for good drink, good conversation, and good (conjugal) sex. Outside his inner circle, however, Adams acted aloof and irritable. Sometimes, while on diplomatic missions, he ate his evening meals alone, in order to avoid his colleagues' post-prandial bad wine,

cheap cigars, and vulgar talk. At other times, when, as he put it, he was not "master of myself," he would lash out rudely at any apparent slight or stupidity. Quick to anger, he would hold grudges for years, even decades, against those he believed had treated him disrespectfully.

Yet Adams, who was exquisitely aware of his "over-anxious" disposition, also admired the "deliberate coolness" and the "real self-command" that he observed in others; and he did his best to hold his emotions in check, fashioning and then donning the Iron Mask that left the rest of the world wondering what was actually on his mind. The Mask proved a valuable tool in diplomatic and political negotiations. Forced to resign from the Senate in 1808 by Federalists angry at his support of Jefferson's embargo, Adams delivered his lectures and licked his wounds at Harvard, only to be persuaded the following year by Jefferson's successor James Madison to take charge of

the American Ministry in Russia. Thereafter JQA's career turned into a string of brilliant triumphs, as a commissioner to the Ghent treaty negotiations, as American minister to Great Britain, as Secretary of State (and architect of important treaties with Britain and Spain, as well as of the Monroe Doctrine), as victor in the fractious presidential campaign of 1824.

If JQA's successes owed something to his overcoming of himself, they also owed a great deal to his political ideas, which the psychologizing Nagel inevitably slights. Simply put, Adams was the



JOHN QUINCY ADAMS BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

for the tiniest of slips: for boastful remarks at dinner, for the mishandling of a minor piece of diplomatic correspondence. His imperfections plunged him into sleepless nights, when he despaired over his utter worthlessness. In his blackest moments, he would copy out excerpts from his favorite poets and playwrights, including these lines from *Henry IV, Part II*: "Oh gentle sleep/Nature's soft nurse, how I have frightened thee/That thou no more wilt weigh mine eye lids down/And steep my senses in forgetfulness."

Adams battled his depressions with valerian root tea and quinine, and with rising early in the morning and exercis-

boldest and most consequential American nationalist of his time. It was his belief in the United States's destiny as a world power that first led him to break with his Anglophilic Federalist colleagues and support Jefferson's embargo. The same belief inspired his greatest achievements as Secretary of State, including the Spanish cession of Florida and the enunciation of the Monroe Doctrine (which might be more properly called the Adams Doctrine) that "the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments," though the United States could intervene in the Western Hemisphere as it saw fit. The same belief led him, as president, to propose a shockingly ambitious program of federal spending on roads, canals, observatories, and a national university, the better to unite the country's various regions, accelerate commerce, and improve the national intellect.

Closely linked to Adams's nationalism was his patrician conception of American politics. Although he gradually backed off from the quasi-Burkean traditionalism of his youth, Adams never put much faith in the political wisdom of the common man, and he put even less in the machinations of professional politicians. Not that he abjured political conflict. Repeatedly, in his diary and in his letters, JQA displayed his enthusiasm for the political fray. In 1811, he actually declined Madison's offer of a seat on the Supreme Court because, he wrote privately, "I am . . . and always shall be, too much of a political partisan for a judge." But Adams's vision of orderly politics was a high-minded one, in which enlightened, patriotic gentlemen from around the nation—gentlemen such as himself—would assemble at the capital, and then tug and pull and settle American policy. He despised party electioneering and pork-barrel negotiations and the corruption known as patronage. He appeared to think of politics and government as drawing-room diplomacy by other means.

And here lay the cruelest irony of Adams's career: the patrician nationalism that had served him so brilliantly as an ambassador and as Secretary of State proved disastrously out of touch with the nation's democratizing realities when Adams was in the White House. In 1824, Adams ran for president against three other nominal Jeffersonian candidates (loosely called Democratic-Republicans)—Henry Clay, the Speaker of the House; William H. Crawford, the Georgia Congressman; and General Andrew Jackson, the war hero. Jackson won a convincing plurality of the popular vote, with Adams running second, but

the Tennessean failed to gain a majority in the Electoral College, leaving the outcome to be decided by the House of Representatives. After some hesitation, Clay threw his support in the House to Adams, thereby ensuring JQA's election, and shortly thereafter Adams named Clay as his Secretary of State.

Adams saw his choice of Clay as a healing act of statesmanship; and on a similar lofty non-partisan note, he spurned patronage requests from his own supporters (who had begun to adopt the name National Republicans). But he had left himself vulnerable to vicious Jacksonian charges that he had reached a "corrupt bargain" with Clay, as well as

to charges of disloyalty from his erstwhile political friends. The Clay affair badly damaged Adams's presidency even before he was sworn in. And not long afterward, JQA's pursuit of an idealistic, nationalist domestic program sealed his administration's doom.

In the mid-1820s, the United States was still recovering from the devastating effects of the Panic of 1819 and the ensuing commercial depression, as well as from the political crisis that had surrounded Missouri's admission to the Union as a slave state in 1821. Workingmen and small farmers, ruined by the panic, blamed their distress on centralized federal policies, especially the poli-

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cies of the quasi-public Second Bank of the United States. Southerners, meanwhile, wary of Northern aggressiveness over the slavery issue, regarded any expansion of federal power as an ominous pretext for the abolition of slavery. Yet here was a freshly inaugurated president—a New Englander who had won less than 40 percent of the electorate's votes—calling for federal improvement programs on a dazzling scale. Not surprisingly, Adams's proposals got nowhere in Congress.

Bitterly disappointed, and more certain than ever that history would judge him a failure, Adams fell into yet another severe depression. Haggard in visage, his appetite gone, his clothes hanging on him like sacks, he endured his last months in office and his reelection effort thanks mainly to his reserves of family pride, his adamant sense of duty and discipline, and a determination that someday, somehow, he would get even with his traducers, completing his presidency with his campaign's pathetically amateurish efforts at assassinating Andrew Jackson's character.

Thus it was John Quincy Adams's politics (and his ideas about politics) as much as his gloomy psychology that proved so costly in the late 1820s. Yet it was also politics (and ideas about politics) that would help him revive his reputation and his *amour propre* after 1830, when he emerged as an anti-slavery stalwart. That revival, however, was the result of an unlikely and important turn of events—Adams's intense participation in a now largely-forgotten populist cause, the Anti-Masonic movement.

III.

Adams's formal involvement with Anti-Masonry began in 1831, just as he recovered from the worst torments of his much-tormented life. His final year as president had been a living torture, as political setbacks and public ridicule dragged him down. His long-foreseen defeat actually brought him a measure of relief; but that relief was dashed the following spring by the outbreak of a controversy concerning his alleged condemnation of some prominent old New England Federalists, followed by the final breakdown and suicide of his deranged eldest son, George Washington Adams.

Heartbroken once more, and almost broke, Adams gradually pulled himself together by indulging his natural aptitude for political maneuvering. He was unable, as his wife later remarked, "to bring his mind to the calm of retirement ... without risking a total extinction of life." In 1830, at the urging of his fellow National Republicans (and with the sup-

port of the local offshoot of the burgeoning Anti-Masonic movement), Adams won a seat in Congress by a landslide. "My election as President of the United States," he wrote in his diary, "was not half so gratifying to my inmost soul."

Within weeks, Adams found himself having finally to make up his mind about the Anti-Masons. Anti-Masonry had been on the march throughout New England and western New York since the mysterious disappearance of the dissenting Mason William Morgan, in Batavia, New York in 1826, and then the alleged cover-up of his alleged murder. Tapping into a pious, rural anti-elitism that had been fueled by the revivals of the Second Great Awakening, and by the extremely secular tensions of rapid commercial development, Anti-Masonic organizers, including Thurlow Weed, turned the justified suspicions and resentments over the Morgan affair into a full-fledged popular cause, attacking Freemasonry as a sinister, aristocratic conspiracy against American liberties, and denouncing, among others, the active Mason and the former Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Tennessee, Andrew Jackson.

In the election of 1828, the aggrieved Anti-Masons had tried to deliver their support to the non-Mason candidate, President John Quincy Adams. Eager to gain anyone's backing, Adams went so far as to denounce secret societies, even promising to divulge the secrets of Phi Beta Kappa, while Jackson stoutly defended his Masonic membership. But there were numerous Masons inside his own campaign, and so Adams refrained from attacking the Masonic order by name, and a formal alliance between grassroots Anti-Masons and the Adams forces failed to develop. The Anti-Masons took to the hustings as an independent organization, won state and local offices, supplanted the National Republicans as the chief opposition to the Jacksonians in New York, and began gearing up for a national campaign in 1832.

In Massachusetts, meanwhile, where statewide support for the Jacksonians was feeble, the Anti-Masons emerged as the National Republicans' main rivals. By early 1831, just after Adams's election to Congress, the divisions in Massachusetts between National Republican insiders and Anti-Masonic insurgents had turned into a full-fledged political brawl. Adams, unexpectedly, threw in his lot with the insurgents. In May 1831, he attended an Anti-Masonic convention at Faneuil Hall; four months later, he described himself as "a zealous Antimason," and he began to produce energetic pamphlets and newspaper essays denouncing Masonry as anti-republican.

There was certainly something odd about Adams—a one-time Harvard professor (and member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences), a long-time champion of federally sponsored economic development, and, since the 1790's, an outspoken foe of visionary, class-based politics—joining a movement that had been initiated by poor farmers against the rich and the privileged, a movement that was happy to proclaim, in the words of one Anti-Masonic editor, that it represented "the lower classes ... for in this country the lower classes are the head of all." There are some unintentionally amusing passages in Adams's diary from 1831, describing his travels by chaise from Quincy to attend Anti-Masonic meetings in Boston, where he was surrounded by roughhewn men whom he knew not at all, and where "none of the aristocracy" was present. It was not the sort of political meeting that the Massachusetts mandarin was accustomed to attending. Nor does it appear to have been anything more than an accident that Adams was not himself a Mason. (His father had failed to join, but not out of a principled objection; and had the father become a Mason, the son would almost certainly have followed suit.)

To some extent, Adams's new-found Anti-Masonic loyalties may have been (as Charles Francis Adams feared that they would be perceived to be) the product of cold political calculation. Anti-Masonic candidates had captured absolute majorities in eleven of the twenty-four towns located in Adams's congressional district, and enjoyed substantial support in the others. At the national level, the Anti-Masons would help keep opposition to the Jacksonians from coalescing around Henry Clay. But if Adams expected that Anti-Masonry would advance his own career, he was sorely disappointed. Although he flirted with gaining the Anti-Masonic presidential nomination in 1832, his way was blocked by Weed and his New York protégé William Seward, who considered Adams a proven national loser. Adams did win the Anti-Masonic nomination for the Massachusetts governorship in 1833, but he gained less than a third of the total vote in the general election, running well behind the (eventually victorious) National Republican. Meanwhile, despite these defeats, Adams continued his attacks on the Masons through 1835, when the Anti-Masonic enthusiasm began to wane; and he would never retract those attacks.

Adams's delayed but ardent conversion to the Anti-Masonic cause must be judged sincere, chiefly because he found Anti-Masonry so compatible with his own well-established political, social, and ethical views. Although he was, by any reasonable standard, a member of the

New England elite, and even with all his reserve and old-fashioned classicism, Adams was actually the least pompous of the early presidents. He was the first to wear trousers instead of knee-breeches, and he thought nothing of swimming nude in the Potomac. His national development policies promised to quicken the sort of top-down economic changes that so many grassroots Anti-Masons found threatening, but Adams was no pro-business Webster-Clay Whig. He was pre-eminently a moralist, who declared that government by wealth was a terrible thing, and who viewed national economic improvement as an instrument for national mental and moral improvement.

Adams's religious outlook—a deep, post-millennial, morbidly self-examining liberal Calvinist piety—merged easily with the “new measure” evangelicalism and “effort Calvinism” that were sweeping through Anti-Masonic strongholds in New England and New York. (Charles Finney, the great evangelist of the Burned-over District and a one-time Mason, broke with the Order and denounced it in terms similar to Adams's, strongly enough to provoke threats on his life.) Armed with that reformist piety, Adams beheld (like the grassroots Anti-Masons) an American political order that, under Andrew Jackson and his friends, had been corrupted by secret cabals of unprincipled spoilsmen and hacks, men who spread “the baneful weed of party strife” in order to advance their personal fortunes at the expense of the common good.

By these lights, Adams did not interpret the Anti-Masonic movement as many old-line ex-Federalists did, as a crude and noisome threat to a virtuous and orderly government. For Adams, Anti-Masonry was the vindication of a virtuous and orderly government. And the movement had the additional merit of melding perfectly with Adams's injured pride. As he regained his political footing after 1828, Adams cultivated his rage and his resentment against three groups of local and national foes: old-line New England Federalists, especially in Boston (many Masons among them), who had regarded him as an apostate ever since he supported Jefferson's embargo; pro-Jackson slave-holders and their Northern sympathizers (many Masons among them) who had turned him out of the presidency; and his longtime opponents for the leadership of the nation's National Republicans, chief among them the Mason Henry Clay.

Thinking about these villains sometimes drove Adams to distraction. “Among the dark spots in human nature

which, in the course of my life, I have observed, the devices of rivals to ruin me have been sorry pictures of the heart of man,” he thundered in his diary in November 1835. In an eerie presentiment of modern-day enemies' lists, Adams proceeded to name names:

[F]rom the day that I quitted the walls of Harvard, Harrison Gray Otis, Theophilus Parsons, Timothy Pickering, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, Jonathan Russell, William H. Crawford, John C. Calhoun, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, and John Davis, W.B. Giles, and John Randolph have used up their faculties in base and dirty tricks to thwart my progress in life and destroy my character.

Politically, it was a strikingly disparate collection of antagonists, running all the way from the crustiest of Boston Federalist snobs to the fiery southwestern democrat Jackson—but political Anti-Masonry offered Adams a means to fight them all at once.

By the time Adams drew up his catalogue of demons, however, political Anti-Masonry was on its last legs. Success quieted the movement, as New England legislatures took steps to curtail the giving and the receiving of Masonic oaths, and lodge membership figures plummeted. In Massachusetts, meanwhile, Daniel Webster secured the political predominance of the mainline National Republicans when he crushed an Anti-Masonic effort to elect Adams to the Senate in 1835—a move that led some embittered Adams supporters, including Charles Francis Adams, to advocate backing the Jacksonian Martin Van Buren instead of Webster for the Presidency the following year. Adams could not bring himself to support Jackson's hand-picked successor and he stayed neutral in 1836. Thereafter, realizing that Anti-Masonry had no political future, Adams, like most of his fellow Anti-Masons, joined Webster and Clay in the newly organized Whig party.

The alacrity of his switch has led some historians to conclude that Anti-Masonry had been nothing more than a fleeting political dalliance for Adams, “an outlet,” as his greatest biographer, Samuel Flagg Bemis, wrote, “for his compulsive genius for political contention.” In reality, however, Adams's Anti-Masonic interlude (like that of so many Anti-Masons) was a profound transition that would mark him for the remainder of his life. Joining the Whigs hardly led Adams to abandon the anti-party political moralism that had drawn him to Anti-Masonry in the first place, and that the movement impressed on him all the harder. Indeed, Adams's distaste for what he called “mere parti-

zanship” distanced him, at first, from some of the more democratic innovations which former Anti-Masons helped introduce to Whig politics. He recoiled, for example, at what he deemed the Whigs' rabble-rousing, much of it coordinated by men like Weed of New York and Thaddeus Stevens of Pennsylvania, which far exceeded what his National Republican friends had attempted in 1828—the gargantuan rallies and “ball rollings,” the endless rounds of stump speeches by candidates and their supporters, along with what he called, amid the Whigs' famous Log Cabin campaign of 1840, the “immense unwieldy mass of political machinery” that “accomplish[ed] nothing.”

Inside the Congress, meanwhile, Adams continued to fancy himself an elevated, independent man of principle, whose course had put him (as he told Charles Francis Adams in 1835) “to the ban of *all* Presidential parties.” For all of his hauteur, however, Adams had learned, as an Anti-Mason, to work with resourceful democratic organizers, and, in Congress, to work with fellow representatives toward contesting for power and toward mobilizing public opinion on behalf of a patriotic ideal. Although he voted with the Jacksonians on few occasions, 90 percent of his roll-call votes in Congress were in line with the rest of the opposition; Adams obeyed what he called “the bugle horn of party” far more consistently than most of the supposedly disciplined Jacksonians did. And along with other rock-ribbed “anti-party” Whigs, Adams gradually softened his stance about political parties in elections. As the *American Review* put it in 1845, whereas a “party” was organized around principles, and hence was something noble, a “faction” was organized solely for patronage and placement, and hence was corrupt. (Needless to say, the *Review* went on to explain that the Whigs constituted a party and the Jacksonian Democrats a faction.)

With this distinction in mind, Adams became a much more fervent Whig in the early 1840s, delivering unvarnished partisan speeches, telling his constituents that he gloried in the name “Whig,” and even (in the 1844 election) taking to the stump on behalf of the Whig national ticket. Unlike the Democrats, he declared, the Whigs had principles, and the great principles for which the Whigs stood, as Adams saw things, were free speech and anti-slavery. And those were the principles which had become Adams's political passions, in his fight against the notorious gag rule, and in his legal work on behalf of thirty-nine African rebels on a Cuban slave ship, the *Amistad*.

IV.

Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* is a big, persuasive rendering of history. To be sure, it is a Hollywood movie, and so it does not lack tacky foreshortenings and other distortions of the historical record. Interestingly, the tampering is far more evident in connection with the American characters than with the captive African rebels, whose seizure of *La Amistad* set the affair in motion. The filmmakers seem to have taken special care to make sure that the Africans acted authentically—in the shipboard uprising, and in the Africans' recapture by American officials in Long Island Sound, and in the courtroom trials that eventually secured the rebels' freedom. These actors speak in African tongues (there are subtitles), and members of different clans are shown sometimes fighting among themselves, and exploring (with wit as well as pathos) how to make sense of their weird situation in a cold and exotic land.

By contrast, President Martin Van Buren, as played by Nigel Hawthorne, comes off more like an amiable buffoon than like the shrewd backroom politician that Van Buren was; and Van Buren's presidency seems to last a year longer than it did. (The film does accurately convey Van Buren's hopelessly equivocal stance on slavery.) Matthew McConaughey's portrayal of Roger Sherman Baldwin, the abolitionist attorney, as an obscure, scruffy young lawyer—whom some of the Africans dub, in Mende, "Dung Scrapper"—is historically absurd. (The actual Baldwin, who was 46 and a distinguished public official at the time of the *Amistad* uprising, was the scion of a prominent Connecticut family, and would be elected the state's governor three years after the *Amistad* case was settled.) Some of the film's political trap-pings are anachronistic. (Van Buren was a Jacksonian in good standing, but he did not kiss babies on the campaign trail.) JQA's moving final arguments before the Supreme Court on behalf of the Africans fill several minutes in the movie, whereas JQA's actual speech lasted nine riveting hours, and stretched out over two days. The film shows Adams face-to-face with Joseph Cinqué (Sengbe, in Mende), the rebels' leader, but there is no historical evidence that the two men ever met.

Still, the film's lapses and manipulations are excusable, because it has succeeded in capturing the political and cultural nuances of the *Amistad* affair and the state of the anti-slavery struggle twenty years before the Civil War. *Amistad* is not merely Spielberg's effort to do for slavery what he did for the Holocaust; this is not *Schindler's Ship*. Better than anything on film that I have seen, *Amistad*'s

scenes involving a fictional black abolitionist (played by Morgan Freeman), the real-life white anti-slavery leader Lewis Tappan, and a collection of pious rank-and-file activists evoke the mixture of sanctimony, stamina, and racial idealism that drove the radical abolitionist movement. Slave dealers (black and white), festive crowds at the Havana slave market, even minor characters such as a British naval officer intent on enforcing the ban on the Atlantic slave traffic—all are presented realistically; and thrown together, they challenge the racial stereotypes that distort contemporary American discussions of race, not least in Hollywood.

Anthony Hopkins plays JQA superbly, though there is too much Welsh in his curmudgeonly Boston accent. The screenplay is vague about JQA's anti-slavery commitments during the three years before the *Amistad* case, and in this way the movie somewhat diminishes Adams's historical role. Still Hopkins uncannily projects Adams's suppressed agonies as well as his querulousness, his zest for scholarship as well as his zest for political intrigue, his pragmatism as well as his idealism. Discounting the fictionalized scenes with Cinqué and a few other flights of fancy, the film is reasonably true to JQA's anti-slavery politics. What is missing is any forthright explanation of how and why America's greatest nationalist managed to get involved with anti-slavery in the first place, and what difference his involvement made.

Prior to 1831, Adams publicly displayed no interest in promoting or even defending any anti-slavery cause. His parents, and especially his mother, had certainly passed along to him their anti-slavery views. In 1820, during the debates that led to the Missouri Compromise, he did have some fascinating conversations with John C. Calhoun, after which he remarked in his diary on the perversion and the hypocrisy of the slave-holders, and noted that "if the Union must be dissolved, slavery is precisely the question upon which it ought to break." Yet Adams, the nationalist, ended up endorsing the Missouri Compromise, thereby adding to a long record of seeming indifference on slavery and its spread.

If Adams had died in 1831 instead of going to Congress, as the historian Leonard L. Richards has observed, "he might have come down in history books as a fence straddler, or even a proslavery Northerner, rather than an antislavery man." Nor, after his arrival in Congress, did Adams think highly of the radical abolitionist movement, least of all its great immediatists William Lloyd Garrison and Lewis Tappan, whom Adams regarded as fanatics dedicated to de-

stroying political decency, social stability, and the nation itself. (Still, Adams refrained from publicly joining the anti-abolitionist chorus of old-line Whigs and racist Democrats.) As late as October 1835, he assured his constituents, and himself, that he had no intention of getting mixed up in what he called the "Slave and Abolition whirligig."

As historians of the period know well (but Spielberg does not make clear), it was not slavery that first galvanized Adams, it was the gag rule over anti-slavery petitions that was enacted only weeks after his "whirligig" remark. Beginning in the mid-1830s, the newly-formed American Anti-Slavery Society, headed by Tappan, organized huge congressional petition drives, demanding (among other things) the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia. Southerners, furious at what they perceived as Yankee arrogance and worried that the abolitionists might stir up slave insurrections, demanded retaliation; and in December 1835, J.H. Hammond of South Carolina (a close ally of Calhoun's) initiated an effort that led to the adoption of a House rule automatically tabling all abolitionist petitions.

Horried at the Southern onslaught against the people's right to petition, Adams fought back from the floor; and for the next eight years he was the moral and logistical leader of the anti-gag rule forces inside the House, ending his crusade only when the rule was finally overturned in 1844. The gag rule fight was well-suited to Adams, as it allowed him to vent his moral objections to the slave-holders and—by extension, to slavery—without raising an issue that contradicted his nationalist principles. As a result, a historical image of JQA has emerged, based partly on hasty readings of his diary, as the lonely congressional voice of conscience—not truly an abolitionist, but enough of a defender of free speech to defend the abolitionists' right to dissent.

This image is misleading. For one thing, Adams was not really alone, even inside the House. From the very beginning of the gag rule fight, he was joined by a small group of little-known but determined Northern Whigs, including one William Slade of Vermont, who consistently spoke up and voted against the gag rule. Significantly, these men were not mainstream Clay-Webster Whigs, but men with Anti-Masonic backgrounds like Adams, who represented districts where Anti-Masonry had been particularly strong. And in Congress these men (with Adams acting as their chief spokesman) managed to gain the support of a large majority of Northern Whigs, opening up

a wedge of sectionalism that would only widen in the coming years.

Although Adams's respect for the Constitution always kept him from endorsing abolitionism, his thinking and writing increasingly concentrated on the slaveholders and their (mostly Jacksonian) Northern friends as a new conspiracy against American liberties. The Slave Power, headed by Calhoun—"the high priest of Moloch," JQA wrote in his diary, "the embodied spirit of slavery"—had displaced the Masonic Power as the great political evil of the day. Numerous historians have remarked that Anti-Masonic Whigs remained moralistic crusaders, and that they imparted to Northern Whiggery a strong anti-slavery spirit. That imparting had its earliest and most significant effects in Adams's and his colleagues' fight against the gag.

Never one to squander a political opportunity, Adams made the most of the controversy, baiting his Southern colleagues, pulling oratorical and procedural stunts on the floor of Congress—knowing all the while that, though he might be ruled out of order or even shouted down, his performances would be reported to the country, burnishing his name and rallying support to his cause. As in his Anti-Masonic days, he had found an issue—and, as he saw it, a conspiracy—that gathered together all of his enemies, from Jacksonian Democrats to conservative Whig gentlemen of property and standing. He quickly began to reinterpret his own life to reflect that issue, charging that it had been "the Sable genius of the South" that undid his presidential administration.

But Adams said and thought and did all of these things in a political world that was very different from the one in which he had grown up. In the new world, clever and demagogic appeals to the people had become an essential part of everyday politics. In his own Olympian way, from Washington and from his home base in Quincy, Adams had learned to participate in that world—certain that he was standing up for principle, not for "mere partizanship." This he would continue to believe until the day he died, accomplishing the repeal of the gag rule in 1844, fighting the annexation of Texas in 1845, and opposing the Mexican War. And so his efforts, and those of other so-called Conscience Whigs, would arouse a growing Northern anti-slavery constituency, leading to the formation of the Republican Party in the 1850s.

The *Amistad* affair was an important step in that long political progress. As the new film shows, JQA was reluctant to take the case. He was too old, he told the abolitionists; his eyesight was

failing, his memory was weak. Yet here once again, as in the gag rule fight, JQA had an opportunity to fight the Slave Power without compromising his nationalism or attacking the Constitution. And once again, after taking the Africans' case, he played his Ciceronian role to the hilt, working long hours to prepare his oral arguments for the Court, delivering those arguments with a flourish (before a jammed courtroom that had turned, according to one onlooker, into "a theater of great interest"), and, after the justices ruled in the Africans' favor, helping to distribute published versions of his remarks around the North in order to advance the anti-slavery movement.

The *Amistad* incident is important to the understanding of the most excruciating issue in American history; and it also holds the key to the enigma of John Quincy Adams. Adams's recovery in the 1830s was not, as Nagel suggests, a matter of his finally mastering his depressive disorders. Nor was it chiefly a matter of an embittered Adams lashing out gleefully in his old age against his old enemies (although there was an element of that). His achievements were finally neither psychological nor narrowly political. By means of his involvement in Anti-Masonry, Adams had made his transition into the new political world of the demo-

cratic republic—and, in that new context, he made the best use of his authority and his skills, in the House and (during the *Amistad* battle) in the Supreme Court. It was enough to make him a popular hero; and it was enough to make him deserve to be one.

Adams's story was an illuminating part of a larger national story. More than most historians have conceded, and more concretely than any historian has yet detailed, the popular political movements of the early nineteenth century had a decisive effect in shifting the terms, the issues, and the practices of American politics. The rise of Jacksonianism was an outstanding example of those effects—but so were a variety of other political developments that were fiercely anti-Jacksonian, including the rise of political anti-slavery, all of which raised the expectations of voters about politics and about the role of The People in the governmental process.

As the example of John Quincy Adams makes clear, those effects touched every level of American politics, including at least a few men whose entire political careers had made them suspicious of the people. In time, the effects would be revolutionary. To be sure, the designers of the democratic party system that arose in the 1830s did not have revolutionary

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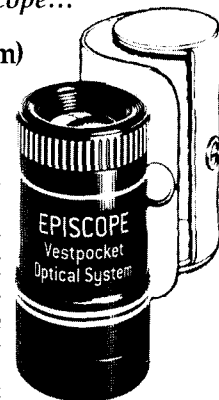
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intentions, least of all about slavery; but the democratic impulses that helped create the new politics, and that the new politics in turn encouraged, could not be easily controlled. And the elitist attempt to do so only inflamed the body politic more, to the point of secession, war, and emancipation.

John Quincy Adams had prophesied as much in the late 1830s and 1840s. He noted in his diary that American democracy could never permanently tolerate human slavery, and that the vulgar politicking of the new partisans would eventually tear the country apart. "Where will

it end?" he wrote of the new style of democratic electioneering in 1840. "These meetings cannot be multiplied in numbers and frequency without resulting in yet deeper tragedies. Their manifest tendency is to civil war." He was right. And he would play his part in making it so, though not in any manner that he could have foreseen when he began his anti-slavery work. Perhaps it is not so far-fetched, after all, to imagine a conversation between John Quincy Adams and Joseph Cinqué. From the standpoint of social justice, the mandarin and the rebel were collaborators in America's future. •

The Stain

BY ANTHONY PAGDEN

The Slave Trade The Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade: 1440-1870 by Hugh Thomas

(Simon and Schuster, 908 pp., \$37.50)

Today slavery seems unthinkable. The idea that it might exist anywhere in the world would shock most people as much as the discovery that there were still places afflicted by the bubonic plague, or places where people were burned alive for their religious beliefs. Yet scarcely more than a century ago it was still possible—for some at least—to look upon slavery as a regrettable but inescapable part of the human condition. The slave trade was effectively over by 1870 (the last verified landing was in Cuba in January of that year); but slavery itself survived in Brazil until 1888, and it was not until 1890 that the General Act of Brussels committed the European colonial powers in Africa to stamping it out in their territories, thereby transforming the abolition of an institution that was for so long the mainstay of the European empires into a part of their "civilizing mission."

Slavery was not only vital to the imperial economies of all the major European powers. It was also an integral and largely unnoticed feature of European life. Thomas Bertram, in *Mansfield Park*, was not the only polished English gentleman to make a fortune out of forced labor, nor was Jane Austen's failure to make any comment on the sources of Bertram's wealth remarkable. His plantations in Antigua exist only to indicate what a good match his son is. It was the fact that the benefits to be derived from

slavery were in this way so plentiful, and yet could be consumed many thousands of miles from their source, that made abolition such a difficult and protracted task. The suffering that slavery and the slave trade imposed upon millions of Africans was almost invisible, though there was plenty of evidence of it for anyone who cared to see. The enlightened theatergoers of Paris, complained Diderot in the middle of the eighteenth century, were prepared to weep their eyes out over the fate of Phaedra, but gave not a thought to the poor African. "It is only the fatal destiny of the unhappy Negroes which is of no interest to us."

This invisibility was partly the consequence of a history that reached back to the ancient world. Modern Europeans may have been unusual in the vast number of peoples that they enslaved in the course of their history; but they were certainly not unusual in building a great, expansive civilization on slavery. Before the creation of modern technologies, few large-scale urban or agricultural developments were possible without the use of massive resources of human labor. And such labor could rarely be acquired voluntarily. Slaves, even when purchased (and until the fifteenth century the vast majority were taken in war), were expendable, and they could be driven to work longer and harder than free men or women. The empires of Egypt and Babylon, Greece and Rome could not have spread far beyond the limits of their

own ethnic regions without the extensive resources provided by costless, and more importantly subservient, labor.

Ancient slavery was in crucial respects unlike modern slavery. In the ancient world, there were many different forms of indebtedness. Most slaves in antiquity, it is true, performed menial mechanical tasks; and most, too, lived lives of abject misery. Like their modern counterparts they were, in law, not persons but things, of which their masters could dispose at will. Yet a large number of slaves in antiquity also occupied positions of considerable responsibility and relatively high social standing. The Romans employed Greek slaves as tutors and household administrators. Athens in the fourth century BCE was policed by a body of three hundred Scythian archers who were slaves. Cicero's confidential secretary, who invented a form of shorthand that was named after him, was a slave called Tiro. And the situation was similar in the Near East. The Abbasids and the Ottoman Turks created slave armies, which in the former case finally seized control of the state. Slaves in the ancient world also came from a wide variety of places, from Gaul and Germany, from Scythia and Namibia, from Carthage. They brought with them different skills, some of which became vital to their masters, and they spoke different languages.

With the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West, this diversity rapidly vanished within Europe itself. The Germanic tribes that took possession of the empire had none of the resources or the ambition to acquire or to control the vast slave populations that had sustained the extensive building programs, civic projects, and urban styles of life of those whom they had vanquished. Early medieval European slaves were employed predominantly as agricultural laborers, and they worked alongside a legally free peasant workforce. By the end of the middle ages, even this form of field slavery had been driven out by the spread of feudalism, the expansion of an agrarian economy, and new agricultural technologies. Most landowners soon discovered that serfs, or indentured peasants, whose legal status was barely distinguishable from that of slaves, were easier to control than slaves, and were generally more productive. Slaves still continued to function as domestic servants; but by the early twelfth century the institution had ceased to fulfill any significant economic function.

When, in the middle of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese began to introduce black African slaves into Europe, they did so at first in relatively small numbers, so as to satisfy this lingering domestic market. It was the massive expansion of a new product, sugar, and the creation

of a new institution, the plantation, that transformed a local and relatively small-scale (if highly profitable) trade into a global traffic that would be rivaled, in scale and in nastiness, only by the arms trade of the late nineteenth century. Hugh Thomas's condemnation of the slave trade as a "disgraceful business" seems, in the circumstances, altogether too gentlemanly.

Slaves were also employed in coffee, sugar, and tobacco plantations, in the cultivation of rice and indigo in South Carolina, in gold mines in Brazil and silver mines in Mexico, and in the vital task of clearing land for agricultural use just about everywhere. They also continued to be used as domestic servants (in Thomas's words) "between Buenos Aires and Maryland." But it was sugar that was responsible for the massive growth in the slave trade between the fifteenth and the eighteenth centuries, and it was the value of sugar to the economies of the slaving nations that made the abolition of slavery at the end of the eighteenth century such a protracted and uncertain business. As Daniel Defoe put it in 1713, "No African Trade, no Negroes, No Negroes, No Sugar; no Sugar no Islands, no Islands no Continent, no Continent no Trade; that is to say farewell to your American Trade, your West Indian Trade."

"So it was," as Thomas says, "that the old institution of slavery was revived in the New World." Still, the sugar plantations of the Caribbean, and on mainland North and South America, were unusual in being part farm, part factory, in having no roots in what is sometimes called the "natural economy" of the areas in which they were located, and in demanding a labor force which, despite early attempts to employ Native Americans, could not be supplied locally. Until the introduction of steam-driven mills, sugar was also a highly labor-intensive crop. Thomas quotes a late-eighteenth-century inquiry into the industry that stated that "to cultivate annually 100 acres of cane requires 150 working negroes in the fields," a figure that did not include the additional slaves to be used in the processing plants, as overseers and as domestic servants. Sugar was also grown in areas where Europeans fancied—not without good reason—that they were unlikely to survive for very long if they did the manual work themselves. Once it became clear that slaves could be acquired relatively easily and in very large numbers, the rate of sugar production could be in-

creased to meet an ever-expanding demand. Thus, at one time or another, the enslavement of Africans became an integral part of the overseas economies of all the major European powers.

The modern slave trade, unlike its ancient predecessor, traveled in one direction only: from Africa to the Americas, and in very small quantities from Africa to Europe. It involved a large number of different peoples speaking different languages. Unlike the slaves of antiquity, however, all of these were Africans, and all of these were black; and this made it easy, for their European captors, to define them as all alike. The conditions in which these people were taken, the horrors to which they were subjected on the infamous "middle passage" across the Atlantic, and the terrifying fate that awaited them in the slave markets on the other side, made the slave trade seem a far greater iniquity than slavery itself. Distinguishing an unjust and iniquitous trade from an

teristically ebullient prose as "a gregarious bachelor who liked neither wine nor women, a patriot, yet more a businessman than a typical prince." No undisputed image of Henry survives. Yet Thomas tells us that "despite his swarthy complexion, [he] probably never shook off the lowering influence of his dominating English mother who, it was said, found the Court in Lisbon a sewer, and left it a nunnery." Thomas also believes, on what evidence he does not say, that Henry was "charming and open-minded," a curious description of a man who dressed in a hair shirt and who, as Peter Russell's long-awaited biography will show, was obsessed by his own failure to emulate the deeds of his chivalric Lancastrian ancestors, and allowed many of his actions to be dictated to him by his astrologers. Still, Henry was open-minded enough to see the future potential of the novel cargo which stood before him, "groaning very dolorously," in Zurara's words, "looking up to the

height of heaven, fixing their eyes upon it, crying out loudly, as if asking help from the Father of nature." He extracted the royal fifth, as was his due, and rode away.

The traffic in "black gold" had begun. It lasted for a little over three hundred years. During that time it was responsible for the largest forced migration in human history: be-



Death of Capt. Ferrer, the Captain of the *Amistad*, July, 1839.

Courtesy Simon and Schuster

unfortunate but unavoidable institution soon became a commonplace, a way of pacifying an uneasy conscience without doing too much damage to a flourishing economy. Even Jefferson could speak passionately of the trade as the "violations of human rights which have been so long continued on the unoffending inhabitants of Africa," without feeling that those same "human rights" demanded that he free his own slaves.

The modern European slave trade is said to have begun with the landing of 235 Africans at Lagos in Portugal on August 8, 1444. (This is where Hugh Thomas's vivid and massively detailed book begins.) This may not have been the first landing, but it was certainly the first to be described in any detail. The royal chronicler Gomes Eannes de Zurara was there to witness the event. "What heart could be so hard," he wrote, "as not to be pierced with piteous feeling to see that company?"

One such unpierced heart, it seems, was that of Prince Henry, the so-called "Navigator," who has every right to be called the father of the modern slave trade. Thomas describes him in charac-

tween 1492 and 1820, five times as many Africans went to America as did Europeans. It shattered entire cultures within Africa, and it constituted new ones on the far side of the Atlantic. ("Ferocious Europeans," railed Diderot in the 1780s, "in order to people one part of the world which you have devastated you have corrupted and depopulated another.") It contributed to the creation of interracial communities of Europeans and Africans, of Africans and Native Americans, of Asians and Africans; and it fragmented and dissipated communities that were once, or believed themselves to be, solidly endogamous. It also provided vast fortunes for those who lived by it, and turned otherwise small, unremarkable seaports—Liverpool and Nantes, Bristol and Newport—into thriving, wealthy, sometimes sophisticated metropolises. It transformed small-time African communities such as Dahomey into powerful states. It was a feature of the social structures, the political orders, and the economic systems of a large section of the globe. It was, as Thomas says, "a planet of its own."

The Portuguese had begun by raid-

ing the fishing villages of Mauritania, activities that they frequently described as being conducted for the long-term good of Christendom. Then, as they moved south into Senegal and Senegambia, their small, lightly-armed ships were incapable of overcoming the larger, better-armed populations that they encountered. Less than two years after the landing described by Zurara, slave raiding had effectively come to an end, possibly prohibited by the king himself (though no such document survives). It is often forgotten that in this, their first encounter with black Africans, the Europeans were soundly defeated. From then on, the Portuguese traded for slaves, from African, and sometimes from Arab, middlemen. (Prince Henry justified this on the grounds that buying slaves from Muslims enabled him to turn their greed against them, ultimately depriving them of vital manpower. Buy enough slaves, he argued, and the way would soon be open for a new Portuguese crusade against the

African Infidel.)

A pattern had now been established which would soon be followed by the Spanish, the French, the Dutch, and the British. Yet it was the British who, by the early eighteenth century, had come to dominate the trade. As William Pitt the Younger told the House of Commons in 1792, "No nation in Europe ... has ... plunged so deeply into this guilt as Great Britain." It is not surprising, then, that the first stirrings of remorse should have come from Portugal, where the modern trade had begun, and that the most sustained, and ultimately successful abolitionist movement should have been conducted in Britain. The story of William Wilberforce's relentless determination is indeed impressive, and Thomas tells it with great gusto. "The debate in the House of Commons was introduced on May 12 ... in a fine speech lasting three and a half hours which set out to show how all the evidence gathered supported the case against the trade. We should imagine him, small in build, rising from the front bench of the chamber, the daylight coming in from the west window. Wilberforce began by declaring that, if guilt existed for the slave trade, all the people listening to him 'were all of them participants in it.'"

But his words fell on the deaf ears of those who, as Thomas writes, "exhibited all the prejudice, and expressed all the received opinions, which had grown up over generations." Year after year, from 1789 to 1804, Wilberforce doggedly pursued his case against slavery, in the face not only of the predictable loathing of the slave owners and their champions (who included members of the Royal family), but far more painfully in the face of simple derision and, towards the very end of the struggle, mounting indifference. "The old enthusiasm for abolition in England," Thomas recounts, "had diminished. The campaigners were growing older, the attentions of Pitt were absorbed by the war, and little really had happened in respect of abolition. The novelty of the cause had grown thin. King George III looked on Wilberforce's activities as a jest. 'How go your black clients, Mr. Wilberforce,' he once asked the statesman at a levée."

On the very eve of their success, it seemed to many of the abolitionists as if the force of the conviction that the servility of the African was his or her natural state would endure forever. How and why public opinion managed to triumph over such powerful interests is a complicated story. It has at least something to do with the introduction of sugar from Asia, as the older Marxist literature on the sub-

ject has always insisted, and the corresponding decline of the need for slave labor in the West Indies. Moreover, as Robin Blackburn has recently shown in *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492-1800*, it has something also to do with the modernization of the European state system and of its overseas economies. As the "baroque" state (this is Blackburn's term) of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries gradually exchanged display for administrative efficiency, it slowly replaced an archaic system of indebtedness with a far more durable and less offensive one.

But the abolition of the trade, and finally of slavery itself, was also the outcome of a massive shift in European attitudes toward the value of human life, and the claims that peoples in remote and alien cultures might have upon us. The French, in particular, had insisted that if the Africans were truly human—and what rational person could deny that they were?—then they must be the bearers of the same rights as all other humans. Slavery was the refusal—the ultimate refusal—to recognize ourselves in others. This, the writers of the Enlightenment had come to believe, was a failure not merely of understanding; it was also a failure of one's own humanity. Slavery, Montesquieu warned, did not only inflict an injustice on the slave, it also corrupted and degraded the enslaver. A slave-owning, slave-trading society was doomed to moral decay. Empires were in some sense looked upon as wholes, and the moral evil that took place in the periphery would ineluctably contaminate the center. Thomas Bertram could not hope to escape forever the moral contagion of what his overseers were doing in Antigua, however rarely he chose to visit the island. Slavery, as Anne-Robert Turgot, sometime French Minister of finance, warned the new United States, "is incompatible with a good constitution."

Thomas mentions very little of this, and his narrative, although it tells us a great deal about what the abolitionists did, leaves us wondering about their motives, about the political culture in which they moved. He provides plentiful detail about what people thought about the trade, and about the various attempts to legitimate it over the centuries, but he makes no attempt to lend analytical sense to all the data he has amassed. Thomas's efforts to understand the tensions that slavery created within the societies it touched are also not greatly helped by recourse to the quaint language of national characteristics: the proud French, the effective Germans, the noble English, the dauntless Span-

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iards, the poetical Russians, and so on; or by talk of one slave as "being wonderfully loyal to her master," as though loyalty in this context should be taken as a virtue; or by the unglossed acceptance of European descriptive practices implied in the outrageous description of the "Jaggas"—a loose European trader's term ascribed to a number of west African peoples—as "savage, cannibalistic, and nomadic"; or by the attribution of a "reluctance of the Africans to Europeanize themselves" not as has been argued (by whom Thomas does not say) to African "weakness," but to "some innate strength of the African personality." These tactless terms do not explain very much about the cultural exchanges between Africans and Europeans.

The real difficulty for Thomas is that, unlike the conquest of Mexico (the subject of his last book), the slave trade has no obvious narrative shape. *The Slave Trade* has a beginning and an end, but in between it is largely an appalling litany of injustices—what William Lecky, the nineteenth-century historian of "European morals" (whom Thomas cites), aptly described as the "unweary, unostentatious and inglorious" story of the struggle for abolition, even it was also one of the "three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations." It may be churlish to demand much analysis of *The Slave Trade*. This book is offered, after all, as a traditional narrative account, rich in anecdotal detail and aimed at a general audience. As Thomas says, the study of the slave trade "can offer something for almost everyone." This book offers the facts.

Like Lecky, and like most British historians, Thomas suggests (somewhat against the thrust of his own narrative) that it was the British who "led the way" to final abolition. Yet the great virtue of his book is that it considers the various histories of all the nations involved in the trade. From this the reader comes away with the impression—and it is surely the correct one—that the abolitionist movement was a European one. As Thomas suggests at the very end of his book, its intellectual origins were French rather than English. It was the French, as Thomas rightly says, who had devised "a new language in which political history could be discussed," and owing to the availability of that language, it was the French who began not only to celebrate, but also to consider the moral consequences of, the new global trading order that became known, in the eighteenth century, as "commercial society."

It was Montesquieu and his heirs who sustained the powerful moral argument

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What are the facts?

The Root of the conflict. The conflict between Israel and the Arabs is not about borders and not about the Palestinians. It is about Israel's very existence. The PLO still adheres to its infamous "phased plan." It calls for first creating a Palestinian state on any territory vacated by Israel and then using that state to foment a final allied Arab assault against the truncated Jewish state.

The Importance of territory. Many believe that in this age of missiles, territory is of little importance. But this is not the case. The Arab states have acquired over \$50

billion of the most advanced armaments since the end of the Gulf War. And those are not just "conventional" weapons—enormous

quantities of tanks, aircraft and much more. The Arab state possess large arsenals of chemical and biological weapons, and all of them work feverishly on the development of their nuclear potential. All of those weapons have only one single target and one single purpose: the destruction of the state of Israel. And that goal is not being cancelled for any agreements between Israel and the Palestinians.

For both "conventional" war and for war of mass destruction, territory and topography are critical for self-defense and deterrence. The mountainous territory of Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is an indispensable line of defense. It totally controls access to Israel's

heartland from the east. Israel needs this high ground for defense and to be able to peer deeply into enemy territory. The high ground allows Israel to detect missiles while they are still in the launch stage and to destroy them.

Would the "West Bank" be demilitarized? Even those who want Israel to retreat to her pre-1967 borders are agreed that the evacuated areas must be demilitarized. But that would be useless. Because the Palestinians will have thousands of trained soldiers, camouflaged as their police force. In case of war against Israel, these troops could be helicoptered in minutes to their positions, with armored

forces reaching them within the same night. In any case, it is highly doubtful that the surrounding hostile Arab nations would allow such a military vacuum

to exist. And finally, there is the matter of terrorism. There are over fifteen Palestinian terror organizations that neither Yassir Arafat nor any other Palestinian authority can control. There would be a constant rain of Katyusha rockets launched into the Tel Aviv area and into the entire coastal plain, which contains 80% of Israel's population and of its industrial and military potential. Ben Gurion airport, every incoming and outgoing flight, would be subject to mortar fire or shoulder-held Stinger attack. Does anybody doubt that the Arabs would not exploit that irresistible opportunity?

"Without Judea/Samaria (the 'West Bank') Israel would be totally indefensible; therefore, neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States are served by Israel's relinquishing control of the 'West Bank'."

Without the "West Bank" Israel would be totally indefensible. That is the professional opinion of over 100 U.S. generals and admirals. Israel's strong defensive posture makes it most inadvisable for Israel's enemies to attack her. But once this defensive strength is removed, a coordinated war against Israel can only be a matter of time. The example and fate of Czechoslovakia, which preparatory to the Second World War was dismantled and shorn of its defensive capacity, insistently come to mind. What does all this mean to the United States? In a part of the world in which our country has the most far-reaching geopolitical stakes, Israel is the guarantor of American interests in the area. With Israel in a position of weakness, the role of the United States in the area would collapse and radical states such as Syria, Iraq and Iran would dominate. That is why, despite the heady prospect of "peace in our time," neither the purposes of Israel nor those of the United States would be served by Israel's relinquishing control over the "West Bank."

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that enslaving was degrading also to the enslaver; and it was Montesquieu and his heirs who pressed upon the French state the obvious point that no society can hope to practice atrocities overseas, and remain innocent at home. This, in their view, was what befell the Spanish. The moral order that the cruel and rapacious conquistadors had established in America finally seeped back across the Atlantic and contaminated the mother country, so that by the middle of the eighteenth century it had become, to all effects, an oriental despotism. And what had happened to the Spanish could as easily happen to the French or the British.

By the time the Revolution broke out in France, there was already a strong hostility to the trade among the educated elite. The Société des Amis des Noirs, founded in 1788, included among its members not only the philosopher Condorcet (who wrote extensively, under a pseudonym, against slavery), Lafayette, and Brissot, but also Robespierre himself. Opposition to abolition set at least one member of the National Convention, Antoine Barnave, on the road to the guillotine. Ending slavery and the slave trade thus became part of the Revolutionary agenda; and in 1794, after bitter disputes between the deputies, the National Convention finally outlawed the trade. Eight years later, however, after the success of the greatest slave revolt in history on the former colony of Guadeloupe, Napoleon attempted to revive the trade. (He was prompted by Josephine, "the brilliant daughter of Martinique" as Thomas calls her.) His success was only partial and short-lived, but in most subsequent histories of slavery it has been allowed to eclipse the achievements of the revolutionaries.

Wilberforce's bill also had to wait until August 1807 to become law, by which time similar legislation had had been passed by both the United States Senate and the House of Representatives. And although it made the slave trade illegal, Wilberforce's bill did not put an end to it. One of the most interesting parts of Thomas's book is his treatment of what he calls the "illegal era," the period after successive European states first outlawed the slave trade on their own territories and in ships under their jurisdiction, and then moved toward attempting to force other nations to follow their example.

The reaction to abolition in Africa itself was confusion. The sudden change of direction by the major European slaving powers seemed inexplicable. Why, the King of the Ashanti asked a British official in 1820, had his people suddenly stopped buying slaves when the Muslims continued to do so? Was not their God

the same, and if the Qur'an did not forbid slavery, why was it that the Bible had suddenly begun to do so? His puzzlement was not unreasonable. Since so much of Western civilization has been created by the forced labor of others, it might seem paradoxical that few, if any, Western societies have ever felt perfectly happy with the idea of enslavement.

The great slave-owning civilizations of Greece and Rome were constructed around the notion of political liberty. The Greeks, wrote Herodotus, in what has become a commonplace, were the most free of peoples, because they were subject not to the will of an individual, but to the law. For Herodotus, the vast slave populations on which the free city-states were built simply did not exist. As with all subsequent slave societies, however, their presence could not be wholly ignored. In a culture that held humanity in such high regard, the tension between free man and slave, between the man who owned and the man who was owned, ultimately demanded some explanation, some legitimization.

Aristotle was perhaps the first to attempt to resolve this dilemma by arguing, in effect, that there were two distinct species of being: free, rational, law-governed men (for the Greeks, both women and children were imperfect creatures), and semi-rational, lawless, "natural" slaves. The "barbarians"—for Aristotle, anyone who was not a Greek—were natural slaves, and so their enslavement was not only just, it was also the only way that they could become what nature had intended them to be. By enslaving him, the master was doing the slave a favor, for a slave was "a living but separate part of his master's frame." A "free" slave was an anomaly of nature. Racism, in anything like its recognizable modern form, played very little role in this. Thomas is too confident when he remarks that "the Greeks and the Romans were unprejudiced on grounds of race"; but there is not much evidence that they attached any great importance to physiological difference. As Aristotle said, nature should have made the natural slave robust and fit for his task, and the natural master outwardly beautiful as befitted the beauty of his mind; but in this, as in so much else, "nature has been unable to accomplish her end."

Aristotle's distinction between master and slave was based on assumptions about their respective mental capacities. The psychological theory that underpinned his argument was a complex one, and, as its critics pointed out, it was ultimately incoherent. But it achieved wide popular success, and it could be rendered down sufficiently to be included in

a late fifteenth-century guidebook on etiquette for young ladies, *A Garden of Noble Maidens*, which Thomas quotes. "The barbarians," the noble maidens were informed, "are those who live without the law; the Latins, those who have the law; for it is the law of nations that men who live and are ruled by law shall be lords of those who have none. Wherefore they may seize and enslave them, because they are by nature slaves of the wise." Claims such as these were used by the Spanish and the Portuguese in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for enslaving Native Americans; and, with some additional racist features, in the nineteenth by the French, to legitimate the enslavement of Africans; and, in attenuated forms, by the British in Australia.

Its weakness, as with all racial pictures of the world, was that it defied the obvious genetic similarities between slaves and masters. Africans, Amerindians, and Aborigines could all procreate with Europeans, and they did so in increasing numbers. However different, however "other," these peoples undoubtedly belonged to the same species as their owners. As Robin Blackburn has pointed out, moreover, slavery also ran counter to the very nature of the master-slave relationship, which demanded of the slave a far higher degree of understanding than that possessed by any domestic animal or "irrational" being. Slave owners in the West Indies frequently named their slaves Jumper, Juno, Fido, and so on, as if they were dogs or horses, and in so doing they hoped that the slaves would behave as such; but naming could not disguise the fact that, in order to do what was asked of them, these had to be people. It was also clear, as Benjamin Franklin dryly observed, that unlike other animals, slaves could rise in revolt.

But there were other arguments for slavery, less dependent upon the supposed mental distinctions between masters and slaves. The Roman jurists, whose rulings were widely accepted in early modern Europe, had made slavery dependent not on mental capacity or skin color, but on circumstance. In Roman law, a captive was defined as someone who had been spared from death in war, and the price he had to pay for his survival was enslavement. As late as 1804, William Devyanes, one of Wilberforce's opponents, and a former chairman of the East India Company, proposed that the slave trade could be defended on the grounds that "if the slave merchants did not purchase from [African kings] their prisoners taken in war, they would be killed."

It was obvious, however, that the victims of the modern slave trade could not

be said to have been acquired directly in war. They had been purchased from African rulers who had seized them in raids whose only purpose had been to acquire this valuable human commodity for the insatiable European market. To this, the advocates of the trade replied by claiming that the Africans purchased by the traders had originally been taken prisoner in "just" wars between Africans. The speciousness of this argument was evident from the beginning. But most slavers accepted what they claimed were African assurances that their human merchandise had indeed been "saved" in a just war, on the principle that it is not up to the purchaser to discover if the goods he is buying have been acquired legitimately or not.

In this way slavery remained linked, throughout its 300-year history, to internecine African warfare. Thomas seems to imply that Africans, since they were involved in the trade, must take some measure of the blame for it. This can hardly be denied. What Thomas overlooks, though, is the degree to which the European slave trade contributed to the situation from which it benefited. The abolitionists had always been fully aware of the possible impact of the trade upon Africa. "The slave trade," bewailed Granville Sharp, one of the earliest of the English abolitionists, in 1776, "preyed upon the ignorance and brutality of unenlightened nations, who are encouraged to war with each other for this very purpose." The consequences of this for the continent have only just begun to be examined, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that at least some of the horrors that modern African rulers continue to inflict upon their peoples, and that African states continue to inflict upon one another, can be linked not only to the disastrous process of de-colonization, but also to the long experience of the European slave trade.

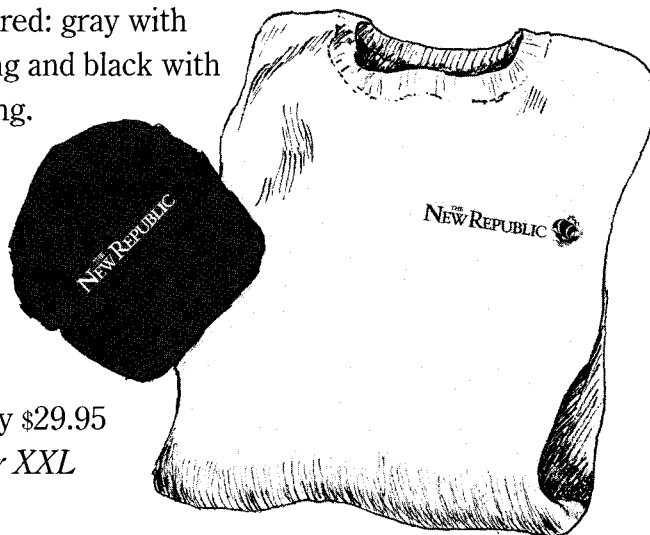
Modern slavers were faced with a further problem: religion. The triumph of Christianity in the Roman world had little immediate impact upon either the arguments for slavery or the condition of the slaves themselves. Since the ancient Hebrews had practiced slavery, and since Jesus does not seem to have mentioned the subject, there was no obvious biblical ruling to be derived. Augustine decided that slavery must be one of God's morally baffling punishments for sin, and the canon lawyers generally agreed with him. The early church, of course, had no wish to upset the legal and political structures of the Roman world, and any criticism of slavery implied—as later

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DAVID LEHMAN

abolitionists were to discover to their cost—an attack on the existing laws of property. For this reason, Luther even warned Christian slaves against “stealing themselves” away from Muslim masters.

Still, Christians were said to share a common life, and although Jesus had denied that this in any way altered their social standing, it was hard to see how slavery—which involved the practical dehumanization of the slave—could be inflicted by one Christian upon another. “Not only the Christian religion,” declared Pope Leo X, “but nature herself cried out against the state of slavery.” Yet not much followed from such outbursts, and Leo himself kept slaves, as did all the Popes. There were general prohibitions against Christians enslaving Christians, just as Muslims were forbidden to enslave those who had converted to Islam, though in both cases this made very little practical difference.

There was also a darker side to the Pauline image of the new Christian man. Since Christianity was associated with a way of life, it was possible to argue that Africans, even if they were enslaved, were better off in the presence of Christians than they would ever be in Africa; and that, although the trade was clearly obnoxious, on the plantations African

slaves stood to gain by their proximity to Europeans. This now seems one of the least compelling (not to say morally obnoxious) of all the justifications for enslavement, and it frequently seemed so to the abolitionists. Yet even Wilberforce believed that emancipating the slaves might ultimately be less important than bringing “the reign of light and truth and happiness among them,” by which he meant primarily Christianity and British “laws, institutions and manners.”

The attempt to legitimate slavery was a powerful contributing factor in the spread of modern racism. For modern slaves were almost all Africans, and the fact that the Africans were black made it possible to defend their enslavement in terms of the color of their skin. One argument, widespread at a time when most people were prepared to accept the literal truth of the Bible, took the Africans to be the descendants of Canaan. In the biblical account of the peopling of the world by the sons of Noah after the Flood, Canaan was condemned to be “a servant of servants unto his brethren,” because his father Ham had seen “the nakedness of his father”; and Canaan was believed to have settled in Africa. Noah’s curse served conveniently to explain the color of the Africans’ skin and their supposed “natural” indebtedness to the other nations of the world, particularly to the Europeans, the alleged descendants of Japheth, whom God had promised to “enlarge.” This reading of the Book of Genesis merged easily into a medieval iconographic tradition in which devils were always depicted as black. Later pseudo-scientific theories would be built around African skull shapes, dental structure, and body postures, in an attempt to find an unassailable argument—rooted in whatever the most persuasive contemporary idiom happened to be: law, theology, genealogy, or natural science—why one part of the human race should live in perpetual indebtedness to another.

Ultimately, of course, it eluded rational explanation of any kind. The last resort of the slave-owners was to claim that, although enslavement was clearly an evil, and involved miseries that were too well-documented by the early eighteenth century to be denied or ignored, slavery itself was not very different from indentured labor. True, the slave was not free to chose his or her own future, but his or her condition was, in practice, often preferable to that of a day-laborer in Europe. In the Caribbean, this argument, rather than improving the lot of the slaves, led to free servants being treated as if they were slaves. In 1647 the legislature of Montserrat went so far as to decree that equally harsh treatment should be applied to both.

By the late eighteenth century, there were many, even among the slave-owners, who agitated for legislation to ensure better living conditions for the slaves, and consequently of an end to the trade. But as long as they persisted in denying the slaves their inalienable right to self-determination, they were, as Condorcet said, merely “adding hypocrisy to cruelty.” For the issue was, and remains, self-determination. No slave has ever willingly accepted slavery. For to do so is to renounce one’s own humanity. Slaves in all cultures have always attempted, where possible, to escape or to revolt, just as they have practiced mass suicide and infanticide to prevent future generations from suffering their own fate. The “happy slave” may be a convenient metaphor for the deluded laboring classes of the industrialized world. But it is an ugly oxymoron.

To possess a sense of what it is to be human, while simultaneously being deprived of the most fundamental human right, means that the slave, unlike the free person, can have no cause for hope. The abolitionists pointed this out time and again. Slavery denies the slave not only a present, it also denies him or her a future. Condorcet and Diderot were right. It is surely this aspect of slavery which sets it apart from all other forms of human dependency, however bestial. For the slave is a thing, not a person; he or she is the object, not the subject, of rights. Strictly speaking, slavery is simply not part of the human experience—which, as Hume recognized, was one reason why the republics of antiquity could never become models for the modern world.

The erasure of personality, of what it is to be human, was the most unforgivable thing about the enslavement of one human being by another. Little wonder that those who suffered from it, far from being (as so many slave owners fondly believed) content with their lot so long as they were well treated, wanted nothing so much as the eradication of the entire institution from human memory. The most powerful image that I have taken away from Hugh Thomas’s book is this: in 1890, the Brazilian abolitionist Rui Barbosa ordered all the papers in the Ministry of the Treasury relating to slavery to be publicly burned. Among those who turned out to watch the pyre was a worker in the customhouse, who claimed to be 108 years old. He came, he said, to witness for himself the “complete destruction” of the documents which contained the history of the “martyrdom” of his race.

ANTHONY PAGDEN is Harry C. Black Professor of History at the Johns Hopkins University.

Like many universities, Virginia Tech compiled and reported statistics for the academic year. For that, the Department of Education found us in violation of the code, since technically statistics should be reported by calendar year, and cited us for not accurately "compiling statistics."

In March 1995, a student reported a rape to the university women's center (but never to the police). This was included in our 1995 crime statistics. However, the alleged rape occurred in September 1994. The department felt that we should have showed this rape in an amended 1994 report. No one ever claimed that we failed to report the alleged rape—only that it should have been reported in a different reporting year. For this we were cited for not having "accurately disclosed" crime statistics.

LARRY HINCKER

Virginia Tech

Blacksburg, Virginia

Reductive reasoning

To the editors:

Richard Wurtman's modesty is exceeded only by his chutzpah! In his article, "Cure All" (November 10), Wurtman argues for more "fast tracking" by the Federal Drug Administration while modestly not claiming credit for his own recent fast-tracking feat which brought us the weight-loss wonder drug, Redux. The ensuing medical media blitz touting this product was soon followed by some fast back-tracking when Redux was withdrawn from the market because of its potentially lethal side effects of primary pulmonary hypertension and valvular heart disease.

Guess this proves the well-known marketing slogan of the diet-drug industry: "It ain't over 'til the Fat Lady Sinks!"

CARL SILVERMAN

Madison, Wisconsin

Richard Wurtman replies:

Give Silverman an "F" for accuracy, and another "F" for relevance. Redux wasn't fast-tracked—its approval was based on the FDA's slow review procedures and on a decade of safe use by ten million patients outside the U.S. The drug wasn't withdrawn because of a putative association with primary pulmonary hypertension. And the jury is still out as to whether or not the drug really is related to valvular heart disease. Does Silverman think it was a mistake for the FDA to have fast-tracked AIDS drugs? And does he oppose fast-tracking effective drugs for breast cancer or Alzheimer's disease? Why should patients with *any* disease have to wait unnecessary years for an effective treatment?

ences, is to determine where that optimal point lies.

Pinpointing the optimal level of racial preference is a hard thing to do under any circumstance. It's particularly hard when you can't even admit that racial preferences exist. At Michigan, blacks are two-and-a-half times more likely than whites not to graduate within six years. This implies that Michigan has, in fact, set its minority admissions standards too low. The lowest-scoring members of the entering class, or some of them, would stand a better chance of success at Michigan State University, which represents the next step down in the state system. The University of Michigan's administration responds that black students' higher rate of failure reflects institutional racism. This is a comically self-refuting explanation: pervasively racist institutions do not typically confess their own racism.

The point is not so much that the university's policies were wrong, even though they were, but that the university implemented them undemocratically. By failing to acknowledge its actions, the administration left itself unable to recognize, let alone cope with, the noxious consequences of its racial preferences. Indeed, the deceit bred a culture of euphemism and dishonesty. Since the only permissible explanation of the problems of a racially and academically polarized campus was racism, the only permissible solution was to attack racism, through more and more racial preferences and more and more harassment, official and unofficial, of the policy's critics. Like Mao's Great Leap Forward, every failure of Michigan's diversity project became a reason to redouble the effort. This is a natural pathology of undemocratic decision-making.

The events in Ann Arbor show how removing affirmative action from the realm of open debate ends up destroying it. But elsewhere, advocates of racial preferences have paid little heed. Last month, John Hope Franklin, chairman of President Clinton's advisory panel on race, refused to include conservative critics in his forum on campus diversity. "The people in California that advocate Proposition 209 ... are not addressing the subject of how to make the university more diverse," he said. "I'm not certain what [Ward] Connerly, for example, would contribute." Of course not. You can never be certain what will happen if you open up a free, democratic debate. But you can be certain of what will happen if you don't.

JONATHAN CHAIT

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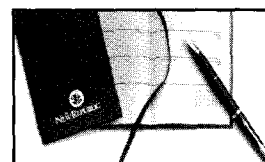
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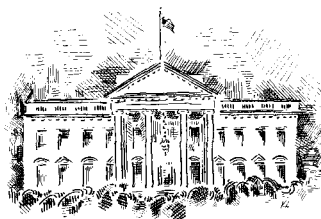
FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER, I have liked employers, trusting that they'll treat their workers well without the heavy hand of government regulation. Not everyone agrees, of course, and I'm used to receiving the occasional jab from the ideological left. I received an unexpected blow recently, however, when I learned of an insidious, stealthy anti-corporate campaign being waged by none other than America's employer-in-chief: Bill Gates.

IN SEPTEMBER, MICROSOFT, ALONG with several other big software makers, began taking out advertisements urging workers to rat on bosses who illegally duplicate computer programs. The ad, which shows a man's chest pierced by a spike, reads—NAIL YOUR BOSS—and has a toll-free number for employees to tell all confidentially. So far, the spot has netted about 200 tips a month, and its initial success has launched a spate of similar campaigns. A Midwestern state is experimenting with a campaign to encourage cashiers to finger bosses who don't pay sales taxes. Ads by a Texas drug-testing lab encourage employees to reveal whether their boss is using narcotics by sending in a few hairs and \$115. Western Special Investigators, a private-investigator outfit in California, will look into your boss's extramarital affairs. Their slogan: "Information is job protection."

SNOOPING BEHIND ENEMY LINES, I recently called one of the software companies funding the ad campaign and told them I wanted to report piracy. I made the scenario as implausible as possible, so no one would get into trouble. The woman who answered the phone, Wendy, said she would take down the information. Which company? she asked. I told her I worked for the Amish Agriculture Cooperative in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. "Wow. That's interesting. What are they doing?" she asked. Bootlegging software—to run their dairy farm. "I've seen it real, real bad," I said almost tearfully. Wendy's voice turned sympathetic: "I'm so sorry to hear that—it's always worse for the children. But, this evil is under every nook. You've done the right thing." She promised to call me back.

I ALSO CALLED WESTERN SPECIAL Investigators under an alias and told them I wanted a background check on my boss—whom I identified as Stephen Glass. WSI offers seven different packages. For \$50, I got the cheapest. For \$3,000 plus expenses I could have found out with whom Glass is sleeping.

WHY GO TO ALL THE TROUBLE? Well, the experience that cemented my passionate pro-boss ideology occurred five years ago, when I landed an internship in a medical lab researching blood flow in fetal rats. The crux of my job was to impregnate the lab animals. This is not as easy as it sounds. Seven days a week, I Pap smeared hundreds of female white rats. Then, at just the right moment, I shackled them up with male rats and dimmed the lights.



FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, the male rats were my employees. I paid good studs with extra food. Bad studs got two warnings and were then terminated (with no severance pay). I threw myself into my work. I became a master of rat love. I even tested the effect of music on sex: Indian is better than classical which is better than jazz. Other researchers would bring me their celibate rats, begging me to use my powers of rodent romance. When all else failed, I would pimp one of my most prolific Don Juans to frustrated colleagues. The other researchers were grateful.

BUT AFTER A FEW MONTHS, things started going wrong. My rats started losing interest. The physical stuff just wasn't enough anymore. I think they felt used. I read management books by W. Edwards Deming about making workers love their job. I created a worker's paradise: more food than they could ever eat, bottle after bottle of water, and as many willing virgins as anyone could handle. Despite all this, they didn't procreate fast enough for the experiment, and I had to hire more and more studs each day. Labor costs soared and dragged down the project, but the rat strike persisted. They even seemed to draw the new rats into their work stoppage. I know how it feels to be betrayed by one's employees.

A FEW HOURS LATER, WENDY called me back. She thanked me profusely. I asked her if she thought I was a tattletale. "We don't like to call it that," she explained and reassured me again. Wendy then went on to explain what software companies generally do when

they find out about piracy. "Software police" inform the company that they are being investigated and that if they don't allow inspections of their hard drives, they will be sued. Virtually no one refuses. Generally, the software companies settle the case for three times the software's value.

THERE IS, WENDY TOLD ME, JUST one small problem: sometimes small (usually Internet-based) companies go out of business rather than buy the software. This, of course, poses a substantial difficulty for the person who ratted: he or she is out of work. "We generally recommend people who call us look for other jobs if it's a small firm," Wendy added. "I mean, like, do you want to work for a pirate?"

ACTUALLY, YES. MAYBE the real reason the software ad angered me

was not because of my pro-management sentiments, but because I have always had a soft spot for computer pirates. When I was in junior high school, I fantasized about being a big-time international pirate. Pirates, I predicted, would be the glamorous mobsters of my generation. There would be speakeasies with illicit arcade games and beautiful women seductively holding floppy disks. I even practiced my pick-up line: "Want to interface?" Nevertheless, my brother and I designed a dial-in computer service called "The Pirate's Cache" to trade software. No one ever called.

LESS THAN A DAY AFTER I ASKED WSI to investigate my boss, I received a short fax. A jotted note at the top told me that I lead an active life as a British star midfielder on Aberdeen's soccer team and that I wrote a book of cowboy recipes. WSI, it seems, had done a Nexis search and figured all the Stephen Glasses were one person. At the bottom of the page was one last tidbit. "Most relevant tip: Stephen Glass was arrested in 1968 for soliciting a prostitute. Call us to follow-up." I wasn't yet born.

A DAY LATER, I CALLED WENDY, THE software piracy hunter, and told her to call the whole thing off. She told me not to "get cold feet" and that she was going to give this top priority since her records indicated that no one had looked into the "Amish chain of companies" for piracy before: "This could be fertile ground for prosecution," she said. I stood my ground. After all, fertility isn't all it's cracked up to be.

STEPHEN GLASS

A Broken Promise

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When Felix Longoria was growing up in Three Rivers, Texas, a barbed wire fence divided the town cemetery into two parts — one for Whites and one for those called “Mexicans” despite their U.S. citizenship. In small towns all along the border, signs in shop windows declared “No Mexicans.” Mexican American tax dollars supported “White Only” swimming pools. For many young men like Felix Longoria, job discrimination closed the door on a brighter future. It wasn’t until he joined the Army in 1945 that Felix experienced the full equality of his citizenship. Unlike their African American counterparts, Mexican American servicemen were not segregated from the majority.

On June 16, 1945, while scouting for enemy positions in a jungle of the Philippines, Felix was struck by a Japanese sniper’s bullet and killed instantly. Back in Three Rivers, his widow, Beatrice, and their little girl waited three years for word that his remains were being transported home for a proper burial. She arranged to have his wake held at the local mortuary rather than in her own living room, as was the Mexican custom.

Just before the train arrived, the owner of Rice Funeral Home told Beatrice that she would have to change her plans. The establishment couldn’t provide its chapel service for the Longorias after all, he said, “because the Whites would not like it.”

The broken promise doubled Beatrice’s grief. She could scarcely believe that fellow Americans whom Felix had died to protect still viewed him as a second-class citizen. Quickly, her pain gave rise to anger, and then to action. Beatrice and her family resolved that the world outside Three Rivers should hear their story.

Through a veterans’ organization in Corpus Christi, the news reached Washington. During a protest meeting at Three Rivers, a courier delivered a message from U.S. Senator Lyndon Johnson of Texas: “I have today made arrangements to have Felix Longoria reburied with full military honors in Arlington National Cemetery ... where the honored dead of our nation’s wars rest.”

The funeral took place on Feb. 16, 1949, as a gray drizzle shrouded the gentle slopes of Arlington. Felix’s whole family was there. Sen. Johnson and his wife came to pay their respects. Mexican diplomats brought flowers in tribute from their country.

A state legislative investigation initially concluded that no racial discrimination had occurred against Beatrice Longoria, but members later called the report into question and it was withdrawn. Felix’s burial at Arlington reversed one glaring injustice, but even for his family, it didn’t provide all the answers. Years later, his sister-in-law still asked herself, “Why should I have come so many miles away to this cemetery? How many Felix Longoria cases must have gone unheard of?”

(The story of Felix Longoria is told in The Shadow of Hate: A History of Intolerance in America, a multimedia resource produced by Teaching Tolerance.)



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